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A PLAN FOR INDIA

NOT for the first time Mr. Wendell Willkie has managed to startle us. He has spoken with a directness unusual in the public intercourse of allies and what he had to say was as important as it was painful. He has called once more for a Second Front in Europe to relieve the pressure on Russia and to place the Germans between two fires. To this he has added a plea for an offensive in Burma, which would bring help to the other member of the United Nations who has borne the full weight of the enemy's attack. In neither instance does the argument from loyalty exhaust the case for action: each of these offensives is urgent and indispensable, if we mean to win the war without intolerable delay. What Mr. Willkie had to say about our supplies to our allies was even more disturbing. He spoke of "boasts and broken promises" and described our deliveries as "tragically small." Some of our cargoes for Russia, after an heroic defence, lie at the bottom of the ocean, but does this good excuse cover the whole deficiency? The loss of the Burma Road is no excuse for the failure to send more than a trifling number of bombers to China. Finally, on the subject of India, he lashed not so much our inaction as America's "silence." He wants, we take it, not merely "wishy-washy" exhortations, but a demand which we could not ignore. We agree with him that India makes a problem which concerns the United Nations hardly less than it concerns us.

How are we to interpret this frank but not discourteous speech? A cynic might say that Mr. Willkie is the head of the Opposition, speaking on the eve of the mid-term elections. That is not our reading of it. Had he wished to discredit the President, who trusted him with a confidential mission, he would have found it more advantageous to attack his domestic policy and the shortcomings of the administrative machine, as the candidates of his Party are doing. Indeed, it was his own followers rather than Mr. Roosevelt's whom he rebuked, when he deplored the attitude of isolationism, which still lurks in some strata of American opinion. But if he was indirectly bidding for votes: what then? The inference would be that in his judgment a large part of the electorate is seriously disturbed both by the lack of enterprise in our strategy, and by our failure to give India her freedom. That fact concerns us more nearly than Mr. Willkie's motives. Our own reading of the speech is that it was the uncalculating utterance of an honest man who had been deeply moved by what he saw and heard in Russia and China. It was the Chinese view of our policy in Asia that he was chiefly at pains to reflect.

On the Indian question the Government has been active, both in Parliament and by broadcasts, in answering American criticisms and our own. The results have been deplorable. By describing the members of the Viceroy's Council as his "advisers," Lord Simon inadvertently confirmed the Indian criticisms of the Cripps offer. It is not enough that Indians should give us advice on the government of their country: we must transfer power to them, if we intend to bring them wholeheartedly into the war. For the rest, the ministerial speeches and broadcasts were merely a set of variations on the theme that every day and in every way Indians are hopelessly divided. Ministers have been making that speech for half a century. What is worse, we wrote it into the constitution by herding them into separate communal electorates. By classifying them continually in this way, we have heightened both their awareness of religious differences and our own. If with all its resources of propaganda and suggestion, this mighty government had through half-a-century steadily reminded Hindus and Muslims that they are divided by outlook, temperament and economic interest across the lines of religion, is it certain that this feud would rage as it does to-day? We have behind us an experience of the working of democracy which might have helped us to dissipate the nightmare which afflicts Mr. Jinnah. He believes that three Hindus will always combine to vote down one Muslim. That was the fallacy which led Oliver Cromwell, as a landowner, to resist manhood suffrage, when the levellers proposed it. He was sure that the landless majority would combine to abolish property. This reckoning staved off democracy for more than two centuries. A similar absurdity delayed the enfranchisement of women. The three Hindus are not a solid group: they will bid against each other for the one Muslim's vote. Why, instead of saying this to Indians, have we always catalogued their divisions? Was it to prolong our rule?

Not even by this device can we continue to prolong it. What we may effect is to break India into two irreconcilable portions. The excuse that Indians must take the next step is not even plausible. How can they, while we refuse all access to the imprisoned leaders of Congress? Mr. Rajagopalachari has a plan which he wishes to lay before us, here in England, "if he can get a passport and a plane." We wish we could feel sure that facilities and a welcome will be extended to this able and courageous man. His plan errs, if it has a fault, on the side of over-elaboration, but in its essentials it stresses what must certainly be done, and done without delay. What was it that Congress had in mind when it insisted that the Viceroy's Council must become "by convention" a genuine Cabinet, as we in this country understand that word? It may have meant that a recognised national leader should, as Premier, be charged with its formation, and thereafter preside over it and hold it together. The Viceroy would then become, in effect, whatever he might still be by law, a constitutional monarch. At present he is rather what the American President is, with the deadly difference that he was not elected. In the second place, we suppose that Congress assumed that the new National Government, composed of Muslims and Hindus drawn from several parties, would be bound by the rule of "collective responsibility," as a Council of officials acting as "advisers" is not. Much as it means to us, it would mean even more to Indians. At present, we try to ensure a fair deal for minorities by various safeguards, of which the chief is the veto of the Viceroy or provincial Governor. But in collective responsibility Indians would have an adequate safeguard in their own hands. The case for the intervention of a foreign arbiter would disappear. If Hindu ministers were overbearing—a fault to which they are not prone—and overrode the rights of Muslims, then the Cabinet would br
up and the Premier would have to place hi
nation in the Viceroy's hands. That.

is what Mr. Rajagopalachari had in mind when he suggested that Mr. Jinnah should be asked to join the Cabinet, bringing with him four members of his own choosing. Some of the leading men of Congress would enter in the same way.

Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Amery have excused their refusal to regard an Indianised Viceroy's Council as a *de facto* National Government by the objection that it would be "irresponsible." There is no Parliament whose confidence it would have to retain. In such an emergency as this, if the Coalition Ministry fairly represented the chief parties, that seems to us a pedantic objection. It could go before the All-India Legislative Assembly and offer to hold itself responsible to this body. It may be objected that this Assembly rests on a very limited electorate. Accordingly, Mr. Rajagopalachari, who may be taking a controversial point too seriously, suggests that new elections should be held forthwith in the provinces. The provincial Legislatures would then elect by a proportional vote delegations which would form an All-India Parliament. If it is urged that this would interrupt the war effort, Mr. Rajagopalachari retorts that it would be a much less serious interruption than the present disturbances, which this agreed solution would bring to an end. The necessary Act authorising this innovation could be passed in a day. We are not sure that this part of the plan (which we had ourselves suggested at an earlier stage of this crisis) is absolutely necessary, but it would greatly strengthen the new Government and go far to convince Indians that their destinies were at last in their own hands. It would, of course, be necessary to assure Mr. Jinnah that the prospects of Pakistan would not be prejudiced by his participation in this *interim* government. Mr. Rajagopalachari has expressed the confident belief that both Congress and the Muslim League would accept this plan. We owe it to India, ourselves and the United Nations to give him the chance to realise it.

African Offensive

For the third time the Eighth Army has begun a major offensive, and we are all holding our breath until we can estimate its chances of success. The preparations, more especially in the air, were thorough. The ports of Genoa and Savona with the munition centre at Milan were subjected to repeated bombing raids. On the other hand, the enemy's furious assaults on Malta had preceded our aerial attack, and indicated that he was engaged in an intensified reinforcement of Rommel's army. No subtle tactics are possible against a short front which cannot be outflanked. It must be carried by a head-on frontal assault. The first stage of clearing a path through the German minefield was followed by the indentation of his first positions by our infantry and tanks after aerial and artillery bombardment. Some 1,400 prisoners were taken. Next, our sappers widened the road thus won through the minefield. The Navy has been active along the enemy's coastal flank. But as yet, at the time of writing, the shock between the main armoured forces has still to come. Progress against defences organised in depth cannot be rapid, but beyond them lies the open desert. At Stalingrad there are no new developments on any great scale in the stubborn and costly struggle, while at Guadalcanal and in the waters round the Solomons the prolonged battle is still undecided.

Nazis and Jews

On Thursday at the Albert Hall the Jewish community celebrated a day of protest against the martyrdom of their race by the Nazis. It was noteworthy because General Sikorsky, Mr. Masaryk and M. Dejean added their expressions of sympathy to those of many distinguished Englishmen. The cruelty of the Nazis had brought to Poles, Czechs and Frenchmen a new sense of fraternity with the tortured Jews. Since the Armenian massacres there has been nothing comparable to these horrors, and they were only a spasmodic outburst which lacked the method, science and continuity of this slow campaign of extermination. The only compensating fact is that at some risk to themselves many Christians, including Catholic bishops and the "common man" in Germany have given help and support to the victims. The anniversary of the Balfour Declaration falls on Sunday. Whether in Palestine or on free soil elsewhere, it must rank among the first purposes of the United Nations to provide for the future of what remains of European Jewry.

The Ministry of Labour on Absentees

The Ministry of Labour has issued to employers a special circular on the problem of absenteeism. This is on the whole a sensible and sympathetic document calculated to prevent unwise prosecutions under the Essential Work Orders, and to counteract the loose talk which is very prevalent just now. The circular fully recognises that a great deal of what is denounced as "voluntary absenteeism" has in truth very good reasons behind it. When women who are also housewives are recruited for factory work, often at long distances from their homes, it is beyond reason to expect them to keep, on the average, as regular time as workers who are accustomed to wage-earning conditions, and have no homes to keep up outside factory hours. Such women may be kept away not only by shopping difficulties or by sheer fatigue, but also by the illness of a husband or a child, or by any accident which upsets the often difficult conditions of home life in wartime. The circular points out that in most factories no attempt at all is made to accommodate the expected hours of work to the special conditions of workers who have exceptional home responsibilities or unavoidably long travel times to and from work. It recommends special provision for such cases, wherever it can be arranged, urges that full use shall be made of workshop machinery in dealing with problems of absenteeism in each establishment, and discourages prosecutions save in the last resort. It also urges more careful compilation of statistics relating to absenteeism, so as to distinguish causes as well as to record total time lost, and lays stress less on disciplinary measures than on the adaptation of industrial conditions to meet the special needs of war workers. All this is enlightened sense, which it is reassuring to see proceeding from a Government department. The whole question is of particular importance just now, in view of the practical exhaustion of the sources of labour supply and of the need for getting the most out of every worker. As the circular points out, the wrong way of doing this is to try to make the loss of output due to absenteeism by driving those workers who are not absent harder than ever; and the right way of tackling the problem is first to be at much greater pains to separate those who have good reasons for absence from those who have not, and then to adapt factory conditions more closely to the needs of the former group, and to proceed, in relation to the latter group, first by enlisting the fullest possible aid of Production Committees and only in the last resort, and in clear cases of slacking, by prosecution. The circular should do much to put the question of absenteeism in better perspective, and to induce employers who have so far been content with denunciation to take a more imaginative view.

The Coal Target

The coal target figures are disappointing, despite the recent improvement in total output. Of the areas which have reached or passed the target output most are small. South Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Shropshire and Somerset are all very small coalfields, and Warwickshire is not large. The only big coalfield to pass the target is North Derbyshire—unless Nottinghamshire, where the figures are still in dispute, is finally added to the list. Consequently there is deep chagrin in most of the coalfields, which will not receive anything as a result of the output bonus scheme instituted after the report of the Greene Committee. This chagrin is the deeper because in many of the areas which will get nothing a number of individual pits have undoubtedly gone beyond their targets. It was a piece of sheer foolishness to base the targets on district output, instead of on the output of particular pits—especially in view of the extraordinarily uneven size of the districts into which the country is divided for the purpose of reckoning the targets. There is almost no inducement to the individual miner to increase his effort if his utmost achievement is liable to be nullified by failure at any of a hundred other points. It is true that the owners pressed strongly for the district as against the pit target, and apparently the miners accepted their policy. But it is pretty clear—as indeed it has been pretty clear from the beginning—that this policy is radically wrong. We hope it will be altered at once—not because we regard monetary inducements to the miners as being the most hopeful way of increasing coal output, but because under present conditions not even minor sources of higher output can be neglected. It is true that most areas fall short of their targets by only a small percentage, and that they may do better over the next accounting period. But that is no answer to the criticism that the men in the pits which have greatly varied their production are bound to feel cheated if they get nothing because other pits, for good or bad reasons, have not succeeded in doing the same. We believe there is a strong section in the Mineworkers' Federation which favours pit, as against district, targets; and we hope those who do take this view will press hard for immediate revision of the existing arrangement.

Wage Policy

Mr. Bevin, in the House of Commons debate, took a very strong line against wage stabilisation, and in favour of the maintenance of collective bargaining methods. He was helped by the gross exaggerations which marked some of the attacks on his policy from the Tory side. It is sheer nonsense to suggest that there has been anything in the nature of a runaway wage inflation, or that Trade Unions generally have done their damnedest to squeeze the uttermost penny out of a favourable labour market. The case against reliance on collective bargaining is not that it has led to excessive general wage-advances, but rather that a point has now been reached in war finance at which it is difficult to see how serious inflation can be avoided unless stabilisation is achieved not only of wages, but also of other kinds of outgoings on current expenditure. As far as the past is concerned, individual earnings have not risen at all unreasonably for the great majority of workers, though of course the total wages bill has risen on account of larger numbers in employment and of overtime work. A quite small section of the workers in the war industries has no doubt been able to appropriate an excessive amount of spending power; but the published averages of earnings are enough to prove that this abuse is not widespread. Such as it is, it could have been checked long ago by the adoption of a more positive wage-policy; but we have always insisted on the impracticability of isolating the wage issue from the wider issue of spending as a whole. The wage-earners will simply refuse to accept a limitation on their spending power which is not applied to other groups and classes; and Mr. Bevin's speech was at bottom a reflection of this very natural attitude, with which he is no doubt fully in sympathy. It is, in effect, not for Mr. Bevin as Minister of Labour to pay wages unless Mr. Bevin as member of the War Cabinet can persuade his colleagues to deal with other forms of spending as well.

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A GRAND ALLIANCE

During the past weeks Mr. Churchill may well have recalled the pathetic line written by his eighteenth-century namesake—

> Greatly his foes he dreads, but more his friends.

The United Nations have not been living up to the adjective in their title as completely as is desirable and necessary. It would be as foolish to exaggerate the differences and difficulties of the existing alliance as to ignore them. A Grand Alliance of equal, sovereign states has always proved a difficult instrument for the waging of war, and the more equal the status of the allies the more difficult is the alliance. Most people will remember that, when the French Government by capitulating left us to face the Germans alone, feelings of dismay were tempered generally in this country by a feeling—usually repressed, but sometimes expressed—of something very like relief. The instinct was historically sound. It was not that we belittled our allies or were glad to get rid of them, but when we said to ourselves, as Low said in his famous cartoon: "Very well, then, alone!" we added silently: "And if we've got to fight this beastly war, at any rate we can now fight it in our own way, responsible only to ourselves."

We are not disposed to treat the rifts in allied harmony, which have been made so much of in German propaganda, as extraordinary or calamitous. They are natural and, if one recalls the revelations of Sir Henry Wilson's diary, for instance, not greater nor deeper than those in the alliance of the last war. But they are serious and should be faced openly; for these kinds of disagreement, though they may not lose wars, prolong them, and, while they cannot perhaps be completely avoided, can with intelligence and good will be narrowed to comparatively unimportant dimensions. Let us examine for a moment one or two of their most recent manifestations which have given so much pleasure to Dr. Goebbels. The demand made by *Pravda* for the immediate trial of Hess is a clear indication of divergence between the Allies. As the letter from our Moscow Correspondent, published last week, shows, the demand is definitely linked to the question of a Second Front by the Russian Government. That Government knows as well as we do that Hess has nothing to do with British and American strategy, and that his immediate trial is out of the question. The incident has, in fact, nothing to do with Hess; it is a symptom of the disagreement with regard to the general strategy of the United Nations and of dissatisfaction of the Soviet Government with the way in which the announcement with regard to the treatment of war criminals was made.

There is clearly something wrong here both with the organisation and the working of the alliance. The alliance cannot work smoothly unless the U.S.A., the British Empire and the U.S.S.R. work together as equal partners in the closest possible association in everything connected with the war and the peace. It is monstrous that at this stage of the struggle Britain and America should act independently of the other partner in such a question as war criminals and thus sow seeds of disharmony. General Wavell in his essay on military genius rightly maintains that one essential test of military genius is ability to act with allies. That is still more true of statesmen and statesmanship; indeed, the supreme test of the statesman in war is his ability to act with his allies, to sublimate all the differences which inevitably arise between allied nations and governments in that one, common, overriding purpose, the defeat and destruction of the armed forces of the enemy. The statesmanship of all three leaders—Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt—will have to be judged by this test, and one thing is certain, that bickering about such questions as Hess and the punishment of criminals at the crisis of the war will be judged to be incompatible with great statesmanship.

Harmonious working of a Grand Alliance depends upon the statesmanship of the Allied leaders, their ability to subordinate all other considerations, personal and national, to the international purpose of defeating the enemy and ending the war. But it also depends upon organisation. We have succeeded in making life so complicated that we cannot even kill one another efficiently in great numbers without the most complicated machinery perfectly adjusted to that purpose. The statesmen of an alliance require such machinery, as much as or even more than the commanders of armies, if they are to agree upon a common strategy and work out the best method of carrying it out. The disagreement with Russia over a Second Front shows that such organisation of Allied statesmanship for a common strategy even to-day hardly exists. It took over three years of war to teach Lloyd George and Clemenceau the same lesson, and the first meeting of the Supreme War Council took place on December 1, 1917. As we too have now been three years at war, it is about time that we at last profited by their experience and our own. Two things at least are essential. As we said last week, the Grand Strategy of a Grand Alliance for 1943 must be agreed upon and planned in 1942. Geography makes it more difficult to obtain this primary co-ordination of strategy in 1942 than it was in 1917, but the difficulties can and must be overcome. Only in this way can the Allies wrest the initiative from Hitler and end the war by passing from uncoordinated defence to a common, planned offensive. But this by itself is not enough. The statesmen of the four principal Allied Powers, if they are to translate such a strategical plan into action, must have an efficient instrument, a single supreme war council which has the necessary executive powers. We repeat—and the experience of the last war confirms us—that for the purposes of a common Allied strategy we have too many uncoordinated committees, etc.; what we require is a small number of inter-Allied bodies entrusted with adequate powers for giving effect to an agreed strategy.

We have space to refer to only one other example of disharmony in the Grand Alliance. The attack upon British policy in the American paper *Life* caused a large storm in a large teacup. An article by Raymond Gram Swing in the *Sunday Express* showed that some of its implications were not understood in this country, for it was a kind of observation balloon sent up by the Republicans and the friends of Mr. Willkie as a preliminary to the next Presidential campaign, the object of the reconnaissance being to see whether Mr. Roosevelt was not vulnerable as a supporter of the wicked British imperialist. But apart from that the incident does show the existence of another and no less important kind of Allied disharmony than that dealt with above. It is the disharmony of peoples instead of their statesmen and governments. There is a good deal of misunderstanding and criticism, if not ill-feeling, between ourselves and the Americans and Russians which, in ordinary times, may be unimportant, but may have serious effects when we are fighting against a common enemy. This kind of disharmony is also largely unnecessary, for it is based upon mutual ignorance. We are continually telling our Allies about the motes in their eyes, forgetting the beams in our own. The Americans are shocked by our wicked imperialism and the way we treat India; we return the compliment by reading them a lesson on the way they treat their negroes and lynching. The Russian concentrates his attention upon the iniquities of our economic system, while we shake our heads over the iniquities of the Russian political system. We do not say that there are not these black spots in our respective national records, but concentration upon them in the middle of the war is not the best way to make us United Nations. The cure for this kind of disharmony may be found to some extent in knowledge and a right use of propaganda. If we knew a little more about one another, and even of the nature and historical origin of our several black spots, we might be a little more charitable. We suggest that the respective Ministries of Information or Propaganda might do something to spread the light by arranging for an exchange of lecturers between the Allied countries on a considerable scale. Americans lecturing on America and its history and Russians doing the same for Russia to an Abca audience would be listened to with the greatest interest, and they would probably dispel some of the ignorance and prejudice which is at the root of national disharmonies. Most people are not nearly as wicked or unpleasant as they appear to be before you know them. This is true even of one's enemies; but it is also true of one's allies.

FASCISM "ANNO XX"

It would be easy to show that Italy's present position outrages the feelings and traditions and damages the interests of Italians; even more easily one could demonstrate that this position is the necessary outcome of twenty years of fascist policy. This might be enough to prove the anti-fascist thesis that Italy is one thing and fascism another. Unfortunately, however, this would not bring us any farther, as, despite Axis disappointment in Russia, Signor Benito Mussolini is still the ruler of Italy, as far as any ally of Hitler can call himself a ruler. Indeed, on October 28, Signor Mussolini celebrated the twentieth anniversary of his rise to power and thus undoubtedly achieved a victory in the "illustrious war against time," to speak with Manzoni's words. This enemy, time, has haunted Mussolini more than anything or anybody else, and he publicly admitted it when, more naively than cynically, he said: "Our watchword is 'to last' (*durare*)." The press is forbidden to mention Mussolini's birthday and even New Year's Day, while everybody has to participate in the celebration of the so-called March on Rome. "59" and "1942" mark the score of time against Mussolini, while "*Anno XX*" marks the score of Mussolini against time.

To this victory Mussolini would have added more substantial laurels, had fascism possessed an inner strength of its own. He has never deluded himself that his people have believed in the advantages of imperial aggrandisement and world prestige, and above all he has tried to play on the weakness of others. Rather easily he conquered the Abyssinian springboard and helped to force a Christian gentleman upon the stubborn Spanish people, so as to watch over the gate of the western Mediterranean. In due course he reduced the already pro-fascist and dependent kingdom of Albania to a territorial annexe of the Italian Crown. He never made a secret of the strategic purpose of such achievements. He tried to neutralise Malta by building up the basis of Pantellaria. He concentrated half a million troops in Libya and three thousand in Italian East Africa, the biggest army the Black Continent has ever seen; this during the ambiguous period of "non-belligerency"—a fascist-coined term intended mainly to damp down the relief felt by Italians over neutrality. The French collapse afforded Mussolini the opportunity to reap the harvest of such long and consistent preparation.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of this opportunity one has only to consider the success achieved by Germans and Japanese during the first weeks of their attacks, without forgetting that Mussolini was confronted by lesser geographical and strategical problems. On June 10, 1940, the day Mussolini declared war, French North Africa and Weygand's Syrian army were near to being neutralised. Franco hurried from neutrality to non-belligerency, thereby strengthening his ideological and political ties with the Axis. Signor Gabrielli in Iraq and the Italian Commission at Beirut and Damascus were not unsuccessfully working out a plan for an Arabian fifth column. The British Navy had only one base in the Mediterranean, Alexandria, Haifa being well within the range of the Dodecanese aircraft and E boats. The British Army and Air Force in the Middle East were tiny.

In a few weeks of blitzkrieg Mussolini would crush Egypt and Sudan between his pincers, led by Graziani in Northern and by the Duke of Aosta in Eastern Africa. Then, through military action, diplomatic blackmail and fifth column in the best Axis style, he would bring pressure to bear upon Vichy, Greece, Turkey, Arabia and Spain, and achieve final mastery of the eastern and western Mediterranean. By violating the international enclave of Tangier, the Christian gentleman had already shown himself quite prepared to share in the booty of French North Africa with his Roman colleague. Four years earlier Mussolini had appointed himself First Marshal of the Empire, and adorned himself with a cap not with one, but with two, general's gold stripes; on this occasion he stated that Italian wars must of necessity be lightning ending in lightning victory. The balance of forces in the Mediterranean in June 1940 seemed to promise such a war. The British Empire would have been split in two by a hostile mass stretching from Narvik to Bulawayo. Air, sea and land passages between East and West would fall into Mussolini's hands, and—even more alluring prey—the Mosul oilfields and their pipelines to the sea. Last, not least, Mussolini would hold some trump cards in the game against his dangerous ally.

The outlook was tempting, the obstacles relatively small; therefore the failure of Mussolini's plans, which became apparent a few months after his declaration of war, seems all the more a military paradox. It can be explained by the fact that Italian fascism is a political paradox.

Twenty years ago the so-called March on Rome was looked upon by the Italians with mixed feelings and encountered no serious opposition either from the constitutional government or from the numerically strong socialist parties and trade unions. The March on Rome was not the result of popular enthusiasm, but of widespread lack of enthusiasm. Italy was more impoverished and disappointed by the Great War than other victorious nations, because she was a much younger country, with smaller economic reserves and less administrative solidity. The Right, narrow-minded and too much concerned with territorial claims, resented the Treaty of Versailles; the Left resented the war itself. Neither cared to remind Italians that the collapse of the Hapsburgs, the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs, and the Caliphs, had raised Italy to the rank of a major European Power, and that Italy—more lucky than France—need no longer reckon with a great and united neighbour on her eastern frontier. Thus the war was remembered by the Italians as nothing but a disgraceful failure both of the Right and the Left. Had not the capitalist *bourgeoisie* promised for years that diplomatic and mechanical progress would assure permanent peace? Had not the socialist organisers assured the people that any war would be paralysed in its first days by the general strike of the united proletarians of all countries? Italians could not help reacting to this disappointment with scepticism towards both Right and Left. A gang numerically contemptible, mainly led by and composed of post-war unemployed of the middle class, stepped in. Once they got into power the instinct of self-preservation taught them to cultivate the already existing mistrust of Right and Left. One has to admit that the various Italian non-fascist parties and, after these were absorbed or ruthlessly suppressed, the non-fascist nations of the world, never seemed to show enough efficiency to uproot this initial scepticism. Fascism sometimes tried to build its power on more positive foundations difficult; but it was a dangerous game, and fascism showed itself consistent and untiring only in negative polemics, like those against the "decadent demo-plutocracies" and the "bolshevik hydra." The manner in which the democracies seemed to have been drawn into declaring war and the puzzling pact of friendship between Moscow and Berlin did not help much to counteract fascist propaganda. As a result, Italians felt themselves neutrals. Such they are still to-day.

The disclosures of the Riom trial and the official reports about the fascist campaigns show that on the whole the Italian soldier was faithful to his neutrality. On the Alps, in Albania, in Cyrenaica, and in East Africa the Italians found in war that right to strike of which fascist legislation had deprived them in peacetime.

As everywhere else, politically conscious and active people are a minority in Italy. Some of them are bound to the ruling clique; others are staunch anti-fascists, anxious to aid the war effort of the United Nations. But it can be assumed that the majority of Italians nowadays are neutral; thus they are passively opposed to the war which Mussolini forced upon them.

The twentieth anniversary of the March on Rome finds Italians facing their eighth winter of war. As in former years, it is a war of expeditionary forces, there is no enemy on the frontiers and no general mobilisation. This winter will be worse than the earlier one because it is the eighth, and an eighth winter of war is worse than a seventh, in the same way as a seventh is worse than a sixth, and so on. Italian rations are smaller not only compared with Germany, but also with some of the occupied countries. The Italian ration of bread is one of the lowest in Europe. There is no coal, not even for military hospitals. War weariness and discontent are spreading. Italy is perhaps the only country in Europe which still knows unemployment; lack of coal, iron and transport have reduced industrial activity to a minimum; lack of copper sulphate and fertilisers have brought famine to the countryside, without diminishing the pressing demands for food and raw materials from the German Government. Since fascism to-day is one and the same thing with Hitler's war, and since Italians feel neutral, one can safely state that most of them are anti-fascists.

From such neutrals we cannot expect a spontaneous revolt which, indeed, might even have regrettable consequences in case it exposed possible leaders prematurely to danger and was crushed with the ruthless slaughter of many a courageous idealist. While realising all these difficulties, the opportunity offered by Italy to the United Nations should not be disregarded. Despite twenty years of fascism, there is favourable ground; it is up to those who have ideas and means to till it. GINO CALZOLARI

SOCIALISM, THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE FUTURE

EDUCATION is a continuous organised process as distinct from unorganised intermittent lectures and courses, which produce merely the dangerously little learning. Education in socialism therefore presupposes a socialist organisation capable of teaching the principles of socialism.

Up to 1914 the one body which could and did fulfil this task was the Labour Party, by which is to be understood all its affiliated groups of which, in the sphere of education the W.E.A. and the Fabian Society were pre-eminent. The thirty years from the glimmerings of modern socialist theory in the eighties up to the outbreak of the first world war saw tremendous progress in what William Morris described as the task of the times, the making of socialists. There was an enthusiasm matched by an inspiring sincerity about the socialist education of these years which it is not easy for those who have known the Labour Party for only the last twenty-five years to appreciate.

Since 1918, and progressively as the years have gone by, the Party has not merely lost its monopoly: it has also lost its enthusiasm, its drive, its power of touching both heart and brain with a feeling and a remedy for social injustice. On the one hand other parties, of which the strongest is the Communist Party, have proved serious rivals for working-class support. The communists especially have shown an appreciation of socialist propaganda the effectiveness of which, if it had not been vitiated by a gyroscopic party line which only the faithful could follow, would possibly have enabled them to oust the Labour Party as the party of the workers. Reacting to this the Labour Party became more and more the political organ of the T.U.C., supported by a sprinkling of left-wing middle-class intellectuals. Slowly, and with some irritation, these intellectuals have discovered that their effectiveness within the party is infinitesimal. Hence the 1941 Committee and the Forward March. The final stage is reached when the Labour Party not merely enters a Coalition Government and supports an electoral truce, but also, in spite of official vociferous denials, enforces a political truce. The Party's functions in educating the workers in socialism are suspended in the interests of rubber stamping conservative, liberal or well-meaning if senile trade-union candidates for the best club in the world.

What are the reasons for this failure of the Labour Party? This is no academic searching. Only by discovering the causes of mistakes can one hope to succeed.

Some will immediately retort that the Labour Party has not failed because, never being a socialist party, its function was not that of teaching socialism. Whilst not accepting this, because the Labour Party has at least a theoretical socialist programme, the mere fact that such an estimate can be seriously made is a strong reason why its propaganda has failed. Since 1918 its presentation of the socialist case has been so timid, so uninspiring, so constitutional that it has failed to convince people of the necessity for socialism. Men are moved by ideals, as wartime propaganda proves. They will die to make a world safe for democracy even twice in a lifetime. In the last twenty-five years the Labour Party, if it has not lacked ideals, has at least been deficient in publicising them. In its early days the movement, with something approaching a revivalist religious earnestness, was fired with feelings for justice, for the uplifting of the underdog, for the solidarity of the working class of the world. Of recent years it has given the impression of being parochial, merely liberal, cautious, painfully academic. The Fabians, for all their virtues, have a large responsibility for this. Their approach, narrow, analytical, practical, severely rational, might appeal to the middle-class intelligentsia, but certainly had no attraction for the mass of working men and women, whose education had been just sufficient to enable them to do their daily work with reasonable efficiency, and to put crosses on ballot papers and football coupons with equal facility if not with equal enthusiasm. Of the three parliamentary parties the Labour Party had a basis and a programme more attuned to the desires of the masses, more humane, more reasonable, more progressive, more conducive to the general well-being as opposed to the well-being of the few, than either of the other two parties. It failed to use its advantages. It failed to persuade people of the essential rightness of its cause. That is not merely the tragedy of the Labour Party. It is in some degree the tragedy of the world.

The constitution of the Labour Party was in itself a severe disadvantage. The party was not a homogeneous political group acting in the interests of the workers so much as a loose alliance of affiliated bodies, whose interests often conflicted, thus weakening the effectiveness of the whole. Historically the party originated as the political organ of the trade union movement, and has continued throughout to be dominated by union influence, exercised in the main by virtue of economic necessity. Unionism in England is basically non-political. Its aim is epitomised in the phrase "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work." Now so long as capitalism is expanding the granting of this aim up to a point does not mean a challenge to the capitalist system. Up to 1914 the unions were not offering a serious threat to the established order, and correspondingly the Labour Party was ineffective in its role as the party of socialism. It is difficult to rise above one's origins. This same ineffectiveness was prolonged into the inter-war period, when conditions had changed, when capitalism in England had definitely ceased to expand. The Labour Party found itself divided between two policies; it might continue to demand a fair share of capitalist profits for the workers; or it might stand out as the party of the new order. In practice it continued to do both, or rather tried to do both, not realising that it must make a choice. The result was that it satisfied nobody and disheartened everyone, especially those who believed in socialism. It ceased to be the party of progress, the party that was to build heaven here on earth, and became the junior and rather scorned partner in the old outworn order.

The question of leadership must also be considered. One of Keir Hardie's striking similes was that a leader is like a stone thrown into the air; it is travelling at its greatest speed at the moment it leaves the hand; the farther it goes the slower its progress, the more hesitant its direction. The Labour Party in its earlier years possessed leaders capable of inspiring love, devotion, enthusiasm and, most of all, a willingness to sacrifice. Before the actual crystallisation of the party there were personalities like William Morris, stumping the country eager to spread the new gospel at all street corners. After its formation it was served by unswerving upright characters like Keir Hardie, lovable personalities like Bruce Glasier. Where are such men to-day? Where have they been since 1918? Certainly not in the Labour Party, if one might except Arthur Henderson, who carried into the inter-war period some of those qualities which marked the earlier working class giants, and who died disheartened and disillusioned in a world which had erected expediency into a universal principle of action. Scan a list of the Labour Cabinets of 1923 and 1929. There you will find one reason why the Labour Party failed to teach socialism.

It is a truism that a teacher must practise what he teaches, a truism that the Labour Party has tragically forgotten. You cannot compromise with the enemy, unless you are prepared to be engulfed in a series of Munichs. Now the enemy for the Labour Party is the capitalist system, assuming that the party is a party of socialists. It is ridiculous therefore for a body of socialists, acting in a corporate capacity to attempt to run a capitalist organisation. Stated as a principle that would appear axiomatic to anyone who knew nothing of the history of the last twenty-five years. How amazed that person would be on learning that on two occasions between 1918 and 1939 the Labour Party attempted the ridiculous. It is no use pointing out that its government was merely a minority government, and had neither the power nor the mandate to introduce socialism. That does not explain the fact that the party twice compromised with the enemy. It emerged in 1932 weak, leaderless, with a disillusioned rank and file, and a nation at large who felt that, whatever the party might say on paper, it was in practice a non-socialist party. We are now witnessing the third compromise, justified or excused on the grounds of national expediency. Whether the party will be able to function again is still a matter that only the future can decide.

The future of the world lies with fascism or socialism. The war affords daily proof of this fact. No compromise is possible. The fascist powers may be defeated by a group of powers adopting their totalitarian fascist methods; they may be defeated by a union of socialistically organised powers. What is impossible is their defeat by nations organised on the old *laisser-faire* lines. England occupies a key position amongst the United Nations. The serious question in England is as to who is going to teach the country how to forge a nation united by socialist principles. That is a question for to-day, not to-morrow. Can the Labour Party return on its tracks and perform this task? Or must we look elsewhere? And where? A. M.

BRING OUT YOUR DEAD

PAPER

A LONDON DIARY

Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to this country can do nothing but good. She has a perceptiveness and a generosity of mind that make her, in her own right, one of the first Americans of her time. I hope she will be given the chance to see things with her own eyes; even more, I hope she will feel free to speak quite frankly about what she sees. There is one story of Mrs. Roosevelt that is, I think, worth telling. Some years ago, at a White House dinner, the President asked his guests their view of the New Deal. Mrs. Roosevelt's judgment was about the best that has ever been made upon it. "We have accomplished nothing fundamental," she said, "but we have bought time to think."

* * *

The answer made by Lord Snell in the debate on planning which Lord Reith inaugurated last week was grimly disappointing. This is being considered, and that is being considered, and it is all very difficult when a coalition is in office; that was the sum and substance of it. The vested interests in this country must be rubbing their hands with glee. By the time the War Cabinet has made up its mind on any of the big issues which planning involves it looks as though the war will be over, and the chance of harnessing the present mood of great expectation will have passed—perhaps for ever. The inertia of parliamentary democracy when the gap between parties in doctrine is wide is a source of grave peril to our future. So far, there is nothing to suggest that the Cabinet even thinks of measuring up to its problems and opportunities. If we enter the post-war world in the attitude of mind Lord Snell described we shall repeat every mistake of the inter-war years. I wish Sir Stafford Cripps would try to communicate some of that famous "urgency" he spoke of in his broadcast to his colleagues in Downing Street. He would not find any lack of response in the people.

* * *

General Smuts's address was, I thought, a disappointment. With all its distinction of phrase, it belonged to the last war rather than to this. It missed putting the issues we confront on the new plane which the vast changes of this last generation compels us to try and understand. And it did not face the thing all of us have got to face—what the factors were which permitted a great nation like Germany to entrust its destiny to a body of gangsters, hardly less, what were the factors which made so many Englishmen of eminence see in Nazism a body of ideas which could not safely be permitted to collapse. Listening to General Smuts, I felt as though he refused to see the implications of this war in full perspective because they were too painful for analysis. The fall of France may, as he said, have cost us Malaya and the Dutch the East Indies. But the central issue still remains of facing starkly why France fell.

* * *

After I had listened to the General's speech I re-read for the seventh or eighth time the first part of Professor Whitehead's *Adventures of Ideas*. I wish I could make the first 127 pages of this book compulsory reading for all politicians. They are, I submit, the most superb commentary on the movement of civilisation written at any rate in our time. Put alongside them any analysis made by any living statesman, and it reads like a schoolboy's essay in comparison. Their weight and dignity and wisdom make them one of the few books of the inter-war period which are destined for immortality. Whether we can learn their lesson in time I do not know. That our victory depends upon our ability to learn their lesson I am certain. Alongside their massive insight, General Smuts' voice sounds like a ghostly echo from a dead world.

* * *

I see that the Fabians began their annual autumn lectures last Saturday with a discourse from Mr. Cole. The succeeding lectures are at least something of a challenge. Mr. Aneurin Bevan is to outline a plan for war; I wish the Minister of Defence could open a discussion upon it. On November 7 Mr. James Griffiths is to discuss a plan for the key industries. Then, after Mr. A. G. Street has reorganised farming, Sir William Beveridge is to discuss his eagerly expected report; that ought to be an exciting occasion. The renaissance of the Fabian Society is one of the most heartening features in the socialist landscape. It owes much to the Coles and to its enthusiastic secretary, John Parker, M.P. But nothing, I think, so clearly shows how real is the new vigour than the fact that Mr. Gwynn Jones, one of the ablest of the younger civil servants, was induced to throw up his official post in the cause of Fabianism. Mr. Parker and he, between them, have made the atmosphere of Dartmouth Street as fresh and vivid as that of Washington in the great days of the New Deal.

* * *

My note on students' reading last week has brought me a very interesting account of a study made recently of the newspaper-reading habits in this country. Two things in it struck me particularly: the very small audience reached by that part of the daily press which seeks to deal seriously with the issues of our time, and the still smaller audience reached by them on Sundays. If pressure of work explains the first result, it certainly does not explain the second; the working man likes few things more than to go through his Sunday paper from end to end. I suspect that we have not yet learned how to make the discussion of ideas seem as natural and exciting to our people as it seems to the Russians or to Frenchmen under the Third Republic—perhaps because our economic and political position since about 1688 made ideas seem less important than in the eighty years or so before the Revolution. If Mr. Williams and the Army Bureau of Education can domesticate the habit of discussing ideas among the troops they would do as much to winning the war as Mr. Mitchell when he designed the Spitfire. One of my colleagues, who did some army lectures this summer, said that he had rarely had a more exhilarating experience. He was especially impressed by the enthusiasm of the troops who had been under Sir Ronald Adam's command. Sir Ronald seems to have had, in an exceptional degree, the art of making those in contact with him believe that an army with interest in ideas is the best kind of army.

* * *

The publishers of Penguins have done a very great service in making available Mass-Observation's survey of the consumer's habits in war-time. Tom Harrisson would, I am sure, be the first to admit that his methods are no more than an approximation to scientific precision. But he and his colleagues throw an invaluable light not only on the citizen generally, but, perhaps even more, upon his rulers. And I am not certain that the abyss which separates the official mind in Whitehall from the mind which lives by its decisions is not the most significant thing that emerges in this study. The criteria of value in a Government department at, say, the level of a principal and upwards, are built upon premises which do not mean very much in Limehouse or in Ancoats. The failure is really something more than a failure of imagination. It is partly the outcome of the Whitehall assumption that relevant inspiration comes from above and partly the outcome of the fact that there is no real acid test of success or failure in a high administrative official. So long as he plods along on historic lines he can assume that all will be well. There is no real incentive to significant innovation. I think myself that the sacred doctrine of ministerial responsibility has something to do with all this. It screens far too many high officials from a real knowledge of the public they serve; and it breeds in too many a dispassionate aloofness from the results of their policy by persuading them that, after all, their function is merely to advise. Otherwise, to take an obvious example, no President of the Board of Education would allow himself to be browbeaten by the churches every time an educational advance is under consideration.

* * *

A friend in Canada who listens to the broadcasts from London comments to me with vigour on the difference between the B.B.C.'s conception of news and that of the American radio commentators in London. He wishes, he says, that we had someone who would interpret its meaning with the vigour and pungency of Mr. E. R. Murrow, whom he puts first of all in interest. The B.B.C., he thinks, is built above all on the principle of "least offensiveness." It does not sound forthright or determined, and its account of British affairs has an "emasculated air" about it. Mr. Murrow, he writes, speaks strongly when he feels strongly; the B.B.C. commentators leave one to choose between the possibility that they do not feel at all or that they are fulfilling an obligation not to feel strongly. He would like to know, for instance, how the reputations of the leading Ministers stand at the end of the year from a good Tory and a keen socialist. Mr. Murrow, he says, makes British politics come alive; the B.B.C. leaves the impression that they died before they were born. In contrast, a broadcast from Mr. Churchill seems the outcome of a medium far too vivid and vital to be connected with Broadcasting House.

* * *

A contemporary reviewer of Mr. E. L. Woodward's deeply interesting autobiography remarks that Mr. Woodward prefers the way of Morris to that of Marx. Since William Morris was an impenitent revolutionary socialist I do not quite understand the distirrction. Is it possible that the reviewer was really thinking of Lord Nuffield? To travel that Morris way would, of course, be quite natural in an eminent Oxford historian.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Helen Weston.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

PERSONAL.—Amateur Escapologist (English methods), adaptable, would like superior energetic friend to tie him occasionally.—Advert. in *Windsor, Slough and Eton Express.*

I would like China and Russia to be in the framework of a new society formed by America and the British Commonwealth, but they would have to get into the "British way of thinking."—Lady Astor, quoted in *News Chronicle.*

We alone among the nations declared war on Hitler without any thought except our duty to the Right.—Sir Ernest Benn writing in *Everybody's Weekly.*

At the annual general meeting of subscribers of the Blue Coat School, Birmingham, to-day, Sir Charles Hyde was again elected president.

Of the future, Sir Charles said they were told public schools should be open to everybody . . this was just a popular cry, not a wise proposal and impossible to accomplish.

"I do not think any really clever child often misses the opportunity of receiving the best education on leaving school," he added.—*Evening Despatch.*

Having pleaded guilty to an act of gross indecency at Perranporth, a 13-year-old-boy was ordered by West Powder magistrates, at Truro, on Saturday, to receive five strokes of the birch. "Your behaviour was most disgusting and un-English," said the Chairman.—*The West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser.*

"CROAKED THE EAGLE: 'NEVERMORE'"

(After Edgar Allan Poe).

While the bombers, southward flocking, set Italian cities rocking,
Suddenly there came a knocking at Il Duce's office door.
He with fiery decision opened to admit a vision,
An expected apparition who had often called before—
Destiny at hand once more.

Into that apartment regal slunk instead a Roman eagle,
Moping, moulting and bedraggled and extremely sick and sore,
With its plumage torn and tattered, beak and talons badly battered
And morale completely shattered, flapped and flopped upon the floor—
Only that and nothing more.

"Answer!" cried the Fascist showman, "emblem of the conquering Roman,
"Fowl of Fate, and bird of omen, winging from the Libyan shore!
"When shall my Imperial legions drive the Allies from those regions,
"When shall I through Alexandria lead the Axis desert Korps?"
Croaked the eagle "Nevermore!"

"When will rebel Abyssinians yield up their usurped dominions?
"When will Suez and Tunisia fall as spoils of glorious war?
"When will Africa surrender to Islam's ordained defender?
"When shall I sweep Mare Nostrum, undisputed conqueror?"
Croaked the eagle "Nevermore!"

"When with Fascist ceremonial entering my realms colonial,
"Shall I reign from captive Hellas to the forfeited Côte d'Or?
"When shall my resolve tenacious lead to conquests still more spacious
"When shall I Rome's world wide empire of antiquity restore?"
Croaked the eagle "Definitely, positively, unequivocally, categorically, irretrievably, inexorably, irrevocably and finally—Nevermore!"

SAGITTARIUS

THE ORGANISATION OF GERMAN MORALE

THE morale of a people at war is based on its interpretation of experience. Victories don't necessarily create good morale; the Germans proved that in the last war. Nor, by themselves, do plentiful rations; the French in 1940 were an example of how bad morale can flourish in comfort. On the other hand, reverses like Dunkirk or Kharkov or hardships like last year's air raids on Britain and the looting of the Ukraine can fortify morale. The ultimate question before victory or collapse is, "Is the war worth while?" When the people answers "No!" the next stage is surrender, as in Compiègne in 1918 and 1940. When the answer is "Yes!" you have London and Moscow, 1941. The object of German propaganda is to interpret the whole of their current experience—the battlefield and factory, rations and heating, the death-rate and birth-rate, suffering and satisfaction, profit and sacrifices—so that each German can say, "Whatever our burdens now, the war is worth fighting."

The middle-aged Germans, Hitler and Goering among them, still remember the smell of the aimless, blood-stained, hungry year 1918, the year of the German answer that further sacrifice wasn't worth while. Hitler has analysed the reasons for that answer—first, absence of war aims, then hunger, human losses from the two-front war and popular division. These reasons remain the pattern of things to be avoided if there is to be no decline in morale. In Hitler's strategy, Goering's home-policy, and Goebbels's propaganda they are constants in the changing situation. Dissent has little chance to become infectious; for the dissenter, whether he is a railway thief or a general, the axe is waiting. But more important to the integration of German feeling are the propaganda directives, radiating from the Government through the Ministry of Propaganda into every corner of German life. Here is a report published on July 15 in the *Berliner Börsen Zeitung* of a conference at the Ministry of Propaganda which illustrates how propaganda is fashioned, not in abstractions, but according to precise information from the heads of the social and production ministries and party leaders who are in day-to-day touch with the German people, know their psychological requirements, the subjects on which they want reassurance, and the promises their mood invites—in short, how to give to all an equal ration of hope and so avoid the jealousies of 1918.

"On Monday and Tuesday the directors of the Reichs-propaganda bureaux assembled in Berlin for a conference on their work. Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels gave the propagandists a comprehensive review of the military and political situation, and expounded for them the special tasks relating to their sphere of work. . . . Dr. Goebbels emphasised at the end of his analysis that the struggle, now as ever, was of the hardest, and demanded of everybody that he gives his utmost. The situation, however, justified the greatest confidence in the future, a confidence which must determine the basic attitude of the political fighter. Victory at all costs is and must remain our watchword. During the conference Gauleiter Sauckel gave a lengthy analysis of labour measures. State secretaries Backe, Ganzenmüller and Gutterer, State-counsellor Meinberg and a large number of other leading personalities in the Party, State and Science spoke about the special problems of their sphere of work."

Political warfare in Germany is not only directed abroad, but is fought on the home front, too. The political fighter (politische Kämpfer) leaves the session to spread confidence and banish fear in the factories, the farms, the SA, the Hitlerjugend, the laboratories, and the theatres. The business man in his office and the swineherd under the oak trees will be told that there will be no Second Front. The business man will read his *Börsen Zeitung* and see that Seversky, the American aircraft designer whose opinions the *Daily Telegraph* featured, is quoted extensively for his opposition to the Second Front, under the heading "Calculation of a Realist." (The Goebbels technique of dealing with the sceptic is to publish frequent extracts from the British and American press, often in misleading context, to support his line of propaganda.) The worker, on the other hand, will be impressed with his western security by a different argument. He will be told at the party meeting that, according to the *Völkischer Beobachter*, 200,000 workers are each month building 500,000 cubic metres of concrete in the Atlantic Wall. Propaganda is the bridge over fear; if the Second Front becomes a fact, Goebbels will still have served his purpose if his reassurances help the Germans to maintain their spirit while they face eastwards.

Nazi war-aims offer satisfaction to all needs. In the Chamber of Commerce the business men are promised markets and security of investment; the formerly mortgaged peasant proprietors of Eastern Germany are offered conquered territory; and the workers are offered bread, butter, cake, homes, central heating, electric light and motor cars. When Goebbels visited Cologne after an R.A.F. air raid, he said: "We're not fighting the war for a privileged class, but for the broad masses whom we can't satisfy without victory." He went on to describe the good things at the end of the road. But words without some material pledge would scarcely satisfy the Germans. The business men are already concessionaires and trustees of plunder; farms of the Ostraum are already in the hands of ex-servicemen peasants; and the masses are to get better rations, an extra 50 grammes of meat in raided areas and a Hitler parcel of flour, beans, butter and sausage for the families of soldiers on leave. The swollen-bellied children of the last war are still a terrible, inhibiting memory to the Germans. The effect of larger rations, apparently confirming Goering's statement that "Not we but the British are blockaded," will strengthen German belief in their war-aims and help to exorcise their fear of hunger.

In maintaining morale among the bombed, Goebbels uses the censorship to obstruct knowledge of raid damage and civilian suffering with the idea that a limited knowledge of the dose makes it supportable. He gave out a slogan "Nie werden sie uns unterkriegen" (they won't get us down) and put it into the mouth of a German worker. It's the German version of "We can take it." After a raid, all the inter-related Nazi organisations are mobilised for relief. Although the scale of destruction has sometimes disrupted the relief services, claims, food, clothing and housing arrangements are normally dealt with at once. The sense of community produced by raids is being fully exploited by the Nazi Party.

The greatest moral stimulant for the Germans is the feeling that they are creating a new order in which they will be paramount. Knowing this, Goebbels looks anxiously at any statement of Britain's post-war plans. When *Picture Post* publishes a series, The Silent Revolution, dealing with the New Britain, the *Berliner Börsen Zeitung* attacks it under the title False Passports, inferring that in Britain progressive views are a masquerade for reaction. Common Wealth is sniffed at as a potential danger to German spiritual leadership—and discarded. The Atlantic Charter is too vague to be dangerous; it doesn't offer bread and butter. But it's an easy target for Goebbels' jibes, and helps him to reassure the German people that they have no rivals for world leadership. The Nazi, seeing the grey lines of Ukrainians with *Ost* patched on their chest working in fields under the supervision of German women, reading that a Pole has been summarily executed for child-rape—the typical crime which Hitler has fastened on to the Polish sub-men, watching the *relève* of French workers redeeming French prisoners, and gloating over the railway trucks rolling from Russia with plunder—the Nazi must think that there is probably something in what Goebbels says.

The old sleeping fears of Germany will only awaken through doubt into panic when hunger and a Second Front become fact.

MAURICE EDELMAN

BARBARA OF SHALOTT

(For Jean Mackie)

"ON and on and on with the story, Bessie!"

Bessie Hipkiss sighed. Really, those bairns were the limit. Little Jenny thought she had nothing else to do but tell her stories. "I'll ha'e to get Daddy's dinner ready," she said. "I'll tell ye another story after that."

"No, now!" Jenny said.

Bessie rose and went to the sink. "After dinner," she said.

"No, now!" Jenny said, putting down her brows and sticking out her small under-lip. "Tell me the story now, or else——"

"Or else what?" Bessie said, wearily.

"Or else I'll hit the baby!" Jenny looked to see if this had made any effect. But Bessie was quite used to her little sister's tactics; she filled a pot with water and began to peel the potatoes. Jenny came over and kicked the wood under the sink. "Tell me a story, Bessie, or else—or else I'll do a wizzy on ma breeks!"

"Oh, ye wouldnie dae that, would ye?"

"I would sut!" Jenny's eyes gleamed as maliciously as the eyes of a child of four could gleam. "I'll do it right now!"

"A' right," Bessie said, wearily. "I'll tell ye while I'm peelin' the tatties."

Jenny stood for a second, then seeing that Bessie was beaten, she went back and lay down on the rug before the fire. "Go on," she said.

"Well, once upon a time there was a bad little girl called Jenny McSquirt . . . ."

"Not me!" Jenny cried. "Not that story! Another one!"

Bessie dropped a potato into the pot, making the water splash. "Well, once upon a time there was a tall, tall girl called Barbara McTurk, and Barbara McTurk was seven feet high. She was so tall and so thin that she could easily have come through the keyhole."

"Our key-hole?"

"Be quiet," Bessie said, "or ye'll no' get ony story."

Jenny scowled, but was silent. She began to pick at the hem of the rug, watching to see that Bessie wasn't looking. Her small face was serious.

"Well, Barbara McTurk lived on an island, in a castle on the island, and the castle had four grey walls and four grey towers. And Barbara McTurk lived in the tallest tower. It was seven storeys high, and you got to the top storey by a narrow, narrow stair. And the island was called Shalott, and Barbara McTurk was called the Lady of Shalott. Well, Barbara McTurk lived on the top storey and she never looked out of the window. She sat all day at her spinning-wheel, weaving a web that was made of all colours of the rainbow. And in front of her hung a mirror, and in the mirror she could see all the people that passed down the road leading to the town of Camelot. Well, Barbara McTurk was very, very lonely and she wanted to look out and wave at the people that were passing, but a wicked witch had put a spell on her——"

"What's a spell, Bessie?"

"Be quiet or ye'll no' hear the story," Bessie said. "Well, Barbara McTurk got more and more fed up wi' bein' shut up in that tower where she couldnie see onybody, only the folk in the mirror. And so she thought she'd take a bit keek oot o' the windy. So she did. And do you know what she saw?"

"You tell me," Jenny said, without looking up from the hole she was boring in the rug.

"Well, you leave that rug alone," Bessie said, lifting the pot of potatoes and putting it on the gas-cooker. "Well, do you know what she saw? She saw a knight riding along the bank of the river. And the knight's name was Sir Lancelot, and he was a great big fat man with a round red face and a steel helmet on his head like the Air Raid Warden's. He was riding a great muckle cart-horse, and it couldn't go very fast because Sir Lancelot was such a heavy man. He weighed twenty-three stone. And as he rode along he was singing, and with every word his ginger moustache blew up in the air in front of his eyes. He was singing. . . . Do you know what he was singing?" Bessie asked, hoping to get a few seconds peace while she looked out of the window at the girl McGillivray and Lily Moore capering with two sailors at one of the entries in the tenement opposite.

"You tell me," Jenny said.

"No, you tell me," Bessie said, watching Lily Moore knock off one of the sailor's caps and run into the entry.

"Run, rabbit, run!" Jenny cried, jumping up with excitement. "Was that what he was singin', Bessie?"

"Ay, that's what he was singin'. Run, Rabbit, Run! And as he was going along a rabbit ran out in front of him, and so he drew his revolver, and bang! he shot the rabbit. And he said to himsel', 'That'll do me grand for supper the night and I'll not need to ask the butcher to give me somethin' offen next week's rations.'"

"Just a minute!" Jenny cried, going to the door. "I'm away for a wizzy!"

Bessie leaned against the sink and looked out of the window. She sighed, feeling envious of Lily Moore and the girl McGillivray down there with the sailors. Some people had all the fun! What fun did she ever get looking after this house and her father and the kids? It was a year now since her mother had died, and since then she seemed to have spent all her time cooking and mending the bairns' clothes and putting them to bed and telling them stories. She was right fed up. Sometimes she thought she'd go away and join the A.T.S., or something. But, of course, her father wouldn't let her, even though she was nearly sixteen now. He thought she should want nothing else but to keep house for him and the bairns. She wished she was back at school again, listening to Miss Aitchison. She wondered if Miss Aitchison had anybody in her class now who could write essays as well as she'd been able to write them. Oh, it had been right fine at school. . . . *Out flew the web and floated wide, the mirror cracked from side to side* (Miss Aitchison threw her arms wide.) *"The curse is come upon me," cried the Lady of Shalott. . . .*

"On and on and on with the story!" Jenny lay down again on the rug, kicking her heels in the air.

Bessie turned from the window and began to lay the table. "Well, where were we?" she said. "Oh, ay, Sir Lancelot was ridin' down to Camelot."

"Tell me aboot a lion, Bessie! I want ye to tell me aboot a lion!"

"A' right," Bessie said, wearily. "A great big roarin' lion came along and when it saw Barbara McTurk it made a dive at her. And poor Barbara McTurk let oot a yell when she saw the lion and ran into the tower and up the stairs. And the lion ran after her, roarin' and howlin'. And poor Barbara McTurk was fair oot o' breath by the time she got to the top storey, and when she got there she wondered what she was goin' to do. She thought she would ha'e to jump oot o' the windy and save herself frae the lion. But she didnie need to do that. Do ye know why?"

"You tell me," Jenny said.

"Well, do ye mind that I tellt ye that the stairs got narrower and narrower as they got to the top o' the tower? Well, the lion stuck [illegible] the top storey and it struggled and struggled so much that it choked and died. And so there was poor Barbara McTurk stuck on the top storey, no' able to get doon the stair because o' the dead lion. Well, she didnie ken what to dae. So she put her head oot o' the windy and stretched her neck as far as it would go—three feet—and she cried, 'Help, murder, polis!' And Sir Lancelot was ridin' along and he heard her. So he made his horse go faster and they jogged along wi' Sir Lancelot bumpin' up and doon like a sack o' tatties on the horse's back and his gas-mask bobbin' up and doon until they came to the tower. Well, Sir Lancelot was so fat that he couldnie get off the horse, so the horse had to kneel down and Sir Lancelot rolled off. And a' the time poor Barbara McTurk kept howlin' oot o' the windy, 'Help, murder, polis!' But Sir Lancelot cried up to her, 'Hold fast, gentle maiden, and I shall be with you in a trice.'"

"What's a trice, Bessie?"

"Be quiet and listen to the story," Bessie said. But she paused and had another look out of the window. Lily and the girl McGillivray had gone away with the sailors. Bessie sighed and watched a vegetable cart slowly move down the street. "Well, Sir Lancelot began to run up the stairs, but he was that fat that he puffed and blew. Still, he kept at it, for he was a great trier. And as he got near the top he pulled oot his revolver ready for any emergency. 'I'm comin', I'm comin', fair lady,' he kept shoutin'. But as he just got to where the lion was—Do ye know what happened? Well, he stuck! For Sir Lancelot was even fatter than the lion. And so there he was, and there was the dead lion just six inches in front of him. Well, Sir Lancelot wriggled and wriggled, but he couldnie free himsel' and he couldnie reach oot and touch the lion. They were both stuck, and poor Barbara McTurk kept her long neck stickin' oot o' the windy, howlin' at the pitch o' her voice. Well, a night passed and a day, and they were still stuck. But Sir Lancelot was gettin' hungrier and hungrier, and as he got hungrier he began to get thinner. He started to shrink. And as the second and the third days passed he shrunk and shrunk until at last he was able to wriggle forrit until he could touch the lion's tail. He got a grip o' it and he tried to pull, but he was still stuck so fast he couldnie manage it. Well, another day passed and another, and poor Sir Lancelot was near dead o' starvation and poor Barbara McTurk was near black in the face wi' yellin' and wi' wonderin' where her gallant hero had gotten to. And so at last a week went past, and then one day Sir Lancelot had shrunk so much that he was able to wriggle free, and he pulled and pulled at the lion's tail until it fell right back on top o' him and they both tumbled doon the stairs and Barbara McTurk was free!"

"And that's the end o' the story," Bessie said, lifting a pot-lid to see that the mince wasn't burning. She looked at the clock. Time to lift baby now. . . .

Jenny sat up on her hunkers. "That's not a nice story," she said, "Tell me another story, Bessie. On and on and on with the story!"

Fred Urquhart

FALSTAFF AND COMPANY

At the Westminster Theatre *Henry IV* (*Part I*) is being played straight through with one short break, and, as it should be, according to Elizabethan conventions (symbolic scenery, apron stage, etc.). It is, of course, a scrappy performance. The cast has been insufficiently drilled in acting together, and here and there a complete lack of experience is obvious in some members of the cast. Such defects are almost inevitable to-day. Yet this performance has its merits too. If you are not too fastidious to stand much empty conventional vivacity of gesture and movement and listening to much confused declamation, you will be rewarded by having enjoyed at least some moments of real exhilaration in the theatre, and you will take away some notion, at any rate, of a play which, though far from being among Shakespeare's best, contains one of his most enormous and unique characters, his richest laughter, his most splendid dramatic prose (Falstaff's is comparable only to Hamlet's), some of his quickest shorthand comments upon human nature, too, and specimens of his gleaming flights of rhetoric.

Mr. Robert Atkins' Falstaff has some excellent qualities. It is (for that much thanks) an unexaggerative interpretation, yet not without gusto. He excels at those moments when a sly, appealing archness is to the point, or when the sublime, wily old impostor is suddenly filled with self-pity and wheedles instead of boasting and brow-beating. One of the winning qualities of that hoary architypal sinner is after all a kind of simplicity. Like all enormous impostors he combines a sort of naïvety with his blatant mendacity. He endears himself not only to us, but clearly also to those on the stage ("I could have spared a better man," says the Prince when he thinks the old ruffian has been killed), not only by his inexhaustible wit and infectious relish for life, but by a shamelessness which amounts to childishness, as well as being a vicarious relief to us all. He is a huge bad boy. And how deeply he understands (unconsciously) himself! At moments of excitement—though at others he is only too dolefully aware of his years—he feels he is young. Recall his war-cry (I want Mr. Atkins to bring this out more; the words must ring through the theatre) as the old footpad is egging on his ruffians at Gadshill against the travellers. "Strike . . . Bacon-fed knaves, *they hate us youth*: down with them! fleece them. . . . On, bacons, on! What, ye knaves! Young men must live!" The inexhaustible comedy of the alternation of repentance with his confidence in his virtue, is counterpart to his feeling that he is both young and old:

> "Go thy ways, old Jack; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There live not three good men unhanged in England, and one of them is fat and grows old: God help the while! A bad world I say——"

Mr. Atkins delivered that admirably, but I wanted him to bellow, "*Young men must live.*"

I will put my criticisms of the other actors in the form of hints, in case they might be useful. Shakespeare's Prince is a carelessly drawn character. It is, in any case, a difficult part. No actor can be uninteresting in Falstaff, but without care in playing "Hal" he will forfeit the sympathy the part is meant to excite. The dramatist blundered when he made the Prince come to the front-stage and declare that he is keeping low company not from love of it, but in order that the contrast may some day be more publicly striking when, like the sun, he will emerge from the foul and ugly mists "Of vapours that did seem to strangle him." This speech turns him into an inverted hypocrite. Who can be much interested in a sham "madcap Prince"? It should be delivered, therefore, as by a Muse of History speaking as "chorus" and quite impersonally. Here, in short, the actor should help Shakespeare to retrieve a dramatic mistake. For the rest, Mr. Wynyard would do well to be less restless, more ironical and less self-consciously gay and graceful. (I know it is difficult.) In Hal's reconciliation with his father his voice should be tearful only for a moment; the dignity of one making a solemn promise of amendment is here more important.

Mr. Nigel Clarke's Hotspur exhibits two necessary qualities: energy and powerful voice. But he is apt to start at the top of both and not keep enough in reserve for the crescendos in his part. In such passages as, "To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon," etc., he might well watch his elocution very carefully rather than concentrate on passion. Hotspur despises poetry (such passages are really Shakespeare ventriloquising) and love. Witness the scenes with Lady Percy and Glendower. Miss Helen Cherry, by the way, is charming but a touch too pathetic in the former—Hotspur's wife had learnt to be content with a chaffing tenderness and rough loyalty. Glendower, alas, was merely absurd. That little scene together with Scott's "Two Drovers" is a little masterpiece contrasting Celt and Saxon temperaments; Saxon sense and boorishness and Celtic absurdity and (it must be added) delicacy and dignity: Saxon wins. The final tableau of Henry IV between his sons each kissing one of his hands under two flags is like some design on "a present from Margate," and should be abolished.

Desmond MacCarthy

THE MOVIES

"Went the Day Well?" at the London Pavilion
"Crossroads," at the Empire

Another war film, in the category of *The Foreman Went to France* and *Next of Kin.* Good story (Graham Greene), good direction (Cavalcanti), everything watertight from Walton's score and the English countryside to the acting of a large cast and the anonymous quotation.

Went the day well? We died and never knew,
But, well or ill, Freedom, we died for you.

It is the sort of film that, after three years of war, with little show and no great expenditure of money, we can make better than anyone. It understates its message, it is beautifully but not too beautifully done, it bridges the gap between talkies and life, between actors and human beings, and English audiences will enjoy and understand it. But, in war-time, there's also the question of temperature. I don't mean the kind of temperatures dispensed by Dr. Barrington in the medical columns of the *Daily Express*, but the degree of sensitivity of the audience. *Went the Day Well?* is a film—a brilliantly plausible, and it may be prophetic film—about invasion. If England is ever invaded this is what the inhabitants of countless Bramleys up and down the land may expect to happen: two lorry-loads of "British" soldiers will drive up one morning, a mistake of the billeting authority will be smoothed out, the officers will sit down to dinner in the manor and the vicarage, the men will play cards in the village hall. Within three days, quietly, unobtrusively, the village will have become a Nazi strong-point, with everyone locked up in the church or otherwise accounted for and no one outside the wiser. Then, general invasion will break. It could be done, possibly it will be done, with just such audacity and thoroughness as imagined by Graham Greene and Cavalcanti. And during the three days in which a stranglehold is being exerted, a detail here and there will give the game away—"Chokalade, Wien," for example, engraved on a slab of chocolate in an officer's kitbag. By then, with the local quislings making confusion further confused, it may be too late, or, as it turns out in *Went the Day Well?* just not too late.

Now, this *may* still be waiting for us round a corner, but at the moment we don't happen to believe it. Invasion isn't in the air; other things are; Russia, Libya, a Second Front, bomber sweeps, convoys in the Baltic and the Atlantic, underground resistance everywhere from Toulon to Rostov. The temperature, then, is high for invading but low for being invaded. That is a piece of bad luck for Cavalcanti. At a time when resistance and trepidation were common, his film would be almost unbelievably thrilling and actual; every tiny slip made by the occupying strangers, every Nazi skull cracked would make audiences gasp. That level of tension does not exist to-day; the action is projected into a might-have-been of Whitsun 1942; we take events calmly. Cavalcanti has insured, of course, against anti-climax. He opens our eyes to reality, even if we may feel that this particular reality is past. Unobtrusiveness of direction, as of everything else in the film, has made for smooth excitement and for a mixture of friendly human nature and waking nightmare that suggests a Mr. Wells with both feet on the ground. There is no starring of actors—the star system, by the way, nearly always fails in British films—and the performances of Leslie Banks (as a quisling), Mervyn Johns, Marie Lohr, Valerie Taylor, Frank Lawton and others are so keyed that we are only aware of seeing more of them than of the individual men of the Home Guard and the Gloucestershire Regiment. Not a false touch, no England-my-England or Miniveration, and the warning may yet prove timely.

Crossroads. Fair thriller, too slow, long court scene, Paris through American specs., amnesia and a past wropt in mystery, William Powell in his first "serious" role for years. This means that, without dog, drinks or Loy, he reverts from the funnybone to the toothache. Hardly an improvement. Agreeable performances by Hedy Lamarr, Felix Bressart and Basil Rathbone. The latter's suits, especially the sports coat with silk handkerchief a-dangling, are as sinister as his looks.

William Whitebait

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Lowes D. Luard, at Colnaghi's
U. Nimptsch and Ian Fairweather, at the Redfern

Mr. Luard is conspicuous among living English artists for the accomplishment of his draughtsmanship. Animals are his favourite models, but the show at Messrs. Colnaghi's includes also figure-studies of uncommon distinction, such as the brilliant *Tight Rope.* The artist has a rare power of suggesting movement—we have never seen the speed of race-horses better suggested than in one of these sketches. He has the good draughtsman's power of selection, so that his work is as succinct as it is unevasive. Perhaps because he so rarely exhibits paintings, Mr. Luard is still much less known to *cognoscenti* than he should be. Mr. Nimptsch's sculpture is sensitive and skilful. His small bronzes in high relief are specially personal and felicitous. Mr. Fairweather has a charming enough decorative gift, but he exploits it rather mechanically, so that his works look better when seen singly. The Redfern Gallery is also showing Vuillard lithographs, and, in the basement, a magnificent Pissarro, and an unusually good, because early, Derain.

Morning Broadcast of Music on the B.B.C. European Service

A change is being made in the hours at which the B.B.C. offers the outstanding musical programmes to which we called attention last week. From next Monday the periods will be 9.45–10 a.m. every day except Sunday; 10.45–11 a.m. and 11.30–11.45 a.m. every day. During the last week we have heard on this programme Bartok's trio *Contrasts*, the Fleet Street Choir singing old Czech chorales, and Miss Kathleen Long playing Mozart and Debussy.

Toulouse-Lautrec Lithographs, at the Arcade Gallery

Mr. Peter Quennell contributes an appropriately stylish introduction for the catalogue of this exhibition, and the lithographs provide a treat by their intrinsic xcellence and by their evocation of a vanished world. Lautrec was usually happier in lithography than n oil-paint, and many of these exhibits represent he most exquisite beauty that caricature has ever eached. From the Paris of fifty years ago come he ghosts of tragedians and *diseuses* and *viveurs* and lowns and tarts—their obesity swollen by the artist, heir meagreness made more skeletal, their dilapidation putrefied. The elegance with which these cruelties re performed commands bewildered admiration. Lautrec can make something even of the meandering *Art Nouveau* shapes that sometimes emphasise the period lavour; and the printed lettering on some of the lithographs—imitations or covers of songs—can also dd to the odd fascination. This show is a nostalgic expedition *à la recherche du temps perdu.*

Correspondence

VANSITTARTISM

SIR,—The controversy between Mr. H. G. Wells nd Prof. Laski about "Vansittartism" in your paper s of high interest, and as a German writer, living here as a refugee, I think I have not the right to nterfere.

But may I be allowed to bring the following into emembrance?

In the summer of 1938 there was the annual P.E.N. ongress at Prague. Several writers (some of them Germans, living at that time as refugees in Czecholovakia) put a publication before the congress; he contents was a protest against Nazi Germany, and specially against those authors and writers who were t the service of the Nazi regime. Though the hairman, Mr. Jules Romains, was against the protest, t might have been accepted if Mr. H. G. Wells had ot spoken with vehemence against it and put the ull weight of his personality in the balance. So the ongress let fall the protest, being a spiritual precursor f the "Vansittartism" and being directed against eading writers in Germany, who were, and are, n a high grade responsible for what we call the arbarism of the Germans.

I do not believe that the protest would have changed he coming facts. Still, it would have been a docunent, but at that time "appeasement" was the ashion; appeasement in which none of those who ad brought that manifesto before the congress believed.

Mr. Jules Romains is now himself a refugee somehere in South America, and he might have changed is mind.

Mr. H. G. Wells has changed his mind, but I have he impression he did go beyond the line adapted o the circumstances. Without criticising his holding at Prague or at present, I think that the H,G.W. of 1938 might come to some understanding with the H.G.W. of 1942. JUSTIN STEINFELD

Czech House, Baldock.

SIR,—Mr. Wells is waspish and sprightly, but he makes assertions without any proof. Since he and Mr. Philip Jordan are so insistent that Lord Vansittart does not advocate the "guilty nation idea," I have re-read *Black Record* with great care. I am afraid that it does seem to me to advocate that idea. It attributes to Germans, at least since the time of Cæsar and Tacitus, a number of evil qualities, the love of war, cruelty, ill-faith, for example, and insists on the need for a "fundamental change of soul" in Germans. It especially insists that there were plenty of ways out for "good Germans," but that they were not taken because "good Germans" were so "precious few."

Lord Vansittart denies on p. 9 that he has attempted a "philosophy of history." In fact, however unconsciously, his whole pamphlet is based on the belief that this war arises out of traits in the German national character which is taken as an unchanging constant.

I think that is precisely the guilty nation idea. If Lord Vansittart does not mean this I think he ought to explain what he does mean. I have not an atom of desire to do him an injustice. On the contrary, the long struggle he waged against appeasement inclines me strongly the other way. But I think it is important to distinguish between national *character* regarded as a constant, and national *behaviour* which is the expression of impulses conditioned by historical circumstances. It is of great practical importance which of these views we take. The outcome of the first may well be a third World War. The outcome of the second at least can be a policy in which behaviour like that of Hitler and his fellow-gangsters is not expressive of the purpose of Germany. HAROLD J. LASKI

SIR,—I am very glad that Mr. H. G. Wells has protested against Professor Laski's remarks about "Vansittartism." We welcome such a lead, those of us who have watched the pro-German line taken on this question by the political direction of the NEW STATESMAN, with deep disquiet and disapprobation. Such an attitude errs against both common sense and knowledge on the subject, and leads to a dangerous confusion of mind, mainly among the intellectually half-baked and the half-educated who follow it. It is a great breach of trust, and of the true function of the intellectual so to mislead them.

One has to be either very clever or very silly not to be able to see that there is something dangerously wrong with the Germans. Ordinary people in this country, whose point of view has been expressed by Mr. Wolstencroft, President of the T.U.C., not by the Laskis and the Gollanczes, appreciate this perfectly well. And their instinct is quite right: it is useless to make this distinction between the Nazis and the German people and to say that the Germans are not responsible for the crimes and the barbarities that they have committed. No doubt the degree of responsibility differs with different groups and classes, but that the German people have a degree of responsibility cannot be denied.

Those of us who are historians and have made a study of the subject—most people have not and can hardly be blamed for not knowing—know that Nazism is the culmination, if at the same time the degradation, of the dominant German tradition of the past two centuries. Hence its tremendous strength: it would never have so captured the German people if it did not appeal to something deep down in them. Not to realise this is to entertain an illusion very dangerous for the future: really the same illusion, on the other side, as the disastrous appeasers entertained before the war.

The Russians realise this perfectly well, and are quite right about the Germans. They *know.* So do the Poles, Czechs, Jugoslavs, the Norwegians—indeed everybody on the Continent. Only these illusionists on the Left in this country are unable to see the facts that stare everybody else in the face.

Mr. Laski, on another page, expresses his admiration for Santayana. I should like to take the opportunity of drawing your readers' attention to the masterly diagnosis of the inner case of the Germans in his *Egotism in German Philosophy:*

"The transcendental theory of a world merely imagined by the ego, and the will that deems itself absolute, are certainly desperate delusions; but not more desperate or deluded than many another system that millions have been brought to accept. The thing bears all the marks of a new religion. The fact that the established religions of Germany are still forms of Christianity may obscure the explicit and heathen character of the new faith; it passes for a somewhat faded speculation, or for the creed of a few extremists, *when in reality it dominates the judgment and conduct of the nation.* No religious tyranny could be more complete. It has its prophets in the great philosophers and historians of the last century; its high priests and Pharisees in the Government and the professors; its faithful flock in the disciplined mass of the nation; its heretics in the socialists; its dupes in the Catholics and the Liberals, to both of whom the national creed, if they understood it, would be an abomination; it has its martyrs now by the million, and its victims among unbelievers are even more numerous, for its victims, in some degree, are all men.'

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JONATHAN CAPE

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A. L. Rowse

[Mr. Rowse mistakes self-righteousness for truth. If he will forget for a moment his own superior position as a historian and all this high falutin' about breach of trust and will take the trouble to re-read what this paper has said on the subject, he will discover that it all boils down to disagreement as to "the degree of responsibility" of different groups and classes—that is, if he really means what he says—which seems rather doubtful. He is mistaken in thinking, if he really does think it, that the paper is Pro-German in the derogatory sense. Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

Sir,—Mr. Wells asks why Mr. Laski misrepresents Vansittartism. Mr. Wells repudiates the suggestion that Vansittartism advocates the guilty nation idea. Will Mr. Wells kindly explain exactly what Vansittartism does mean? I have read *Black Record* and other writings by Lord Vansittart and he seems to repudiate his own doctrine which, in *Black Record*, certainly seems to inculcate the guilty nation idea. The supporters of Vansittartism all hasten to explain what it doesn't represent, but nobody appears to know what it does.

I. Waveney Girvan

POLITICAL AWAKENING

Sir,—Everywhere, you point out, the old assumptions about politics and society are being questioned and so they are in the sense you describe as a vague, uninstructed, undirected desire for a better social order. You argue that this precisely is Labour's opportunity before it is too late to put over an active non-stop campaign for its programme of democratic Socialism.

I beg to submit that in a deeper sense, unfortunately, those very assumptions are intimately associated in the public mind with "democratic liberties" while Socialism is not. Like its bastard namesake, National Socialism, it is associated with regimentation or the denial of democratic liberties, and these principally are what people feel they are fighting to protect and reinstate. Conservatives count on this popular illusion about Socialism and sedulously foster it to ensure that the old order is kept going, the example of socialist Russia notwithstanding.

Labour in the last 20 years has campaigned for Socialism pure, gradualist, and partial and yet with huge unemployment and social insecurity to point the moral, it has always come a cropper. Hence the present demoralisation in the Labour leadership. This hamstrung feeling is not coalition inspired. It goes back years before the war.

It seems to me that Labour has to get clear about two things before as a leadership it can pick up its nerve and lead: whether the strategy of Socialism in the long run is compatible with the transitional tactics of (1) leaving the owners entirely in possession, and (2) offering suitable incentives to industry, finance, and commerce (replacing the temporary incentives represented by war and the need to win) to co-operate under Government auspices after the war in the unified direction of economic activities for planned production and full employment at a guaranteed sufficiency wage, a standard profit or dividend, and a standard price at each stage of production through to the retail end?

If the answer to (1) is "no," then we are back in our quandary—the people will not—or not yet—have Socialism partial or whole and we have to face it. If the answer to (2) is again "no," that some kind of planned economy is inevitable after the war anyhow and Labour can win the power to steer it if it prepares in time, then I submit we are pitifully under-estimating the resources and propaganda of British Capitalism, especially monopoly and banking capitalism, organised in the Conservative Party, to racketeer and win a victory election and, backed by its American counterpart, to force its way back to the *status quo ante* in the name of "our liberties" when conditions look ripe; or if it does feel obliged to plan for full employment, to adapt the wartime controls to some neo-fascist type of planned economy with profits and not wages as the pivot.

Therefore I believe that the answer is "yes" to both questions, and to appreciate this is critical for the future of the Labour Party. Under (2) for "incentives" read "compensation for the sacrifice of existing and future profitabilities as free *entrepreneurs*." This means Government stock to the amount of the assessed compensation based on recorded book profits over a period. Under (2) is also comprised unified direction of export and import, a banking and currency policy harnessed to industrial needs, centralised control of new investment, and the continuance of rationing till production and trade get into stride again. The wartime controls, widened to include the trade unions, Government and consumer representatives, provide a basis to build upon.

In other words, what Labour needs to surmounts its crisis—a policy crisis at bottom—is a kind of NEP reflecting the strategy of Socialism applied to British conditions, something to grease the wheels by gearing social change to the hard realities of existing economic motivations.

Philip Butler

HEINRICH ADAM

Sir,—The October 3rd issue of the New Statesman and Nation publishes an article by Mr. Harold J. Laski under the heading A London Diary, in which he reports that the signal for the strike in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was given by a German worker called Heinrich Adam.

May I first draw your attention upon the fact that the signal for the general strike, which took place in Luxembourg on August 30th as a protest against the annexation of the Grand Duchy by the Reich and the conscription of her young men for German military service, was given by a young worker called Biren from Schifflange. This young Luxembourger has since been court-martialled and shot by the Nazis, together with fifteen other workers, one railwayman, four teachers, and four civil servants.

All twenty-five have been murdered by the Nazis for taking part in this general strike. Those mentioned constitute only a first list, and the repression goes on with the wholesale deportation of the Luxembourg population.

One of the shot workers was Henri Adam.

He had come to Luxembourg as a child and was brought up in Luxembourg by Luxembourg teachers (see above). He married a Luxembourg girl, had Luxembourg children, and had become a Luxembourg subject in 1934. He had been working in Luxembourg for at least thirty years without interruption, and in the strike he behaved like a Luxembourger. The trade unions of Luxembourg, for which he was a devoted member, had entrusted him since many years with a confidential post in the organisation.

We mourn all these victims of Nazi terror and they will not have died in vain.

But you understand, Mr. Editor, that their memories do not allow their being quoted as the proof of the non-acquiescence of German workers in the Hitler régime. They lived and died as patriots for their beloved country, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, because they refused to be presented with the nationality of the so-called "Herrenvolk."

Victor Bodson
Minister of Justice of the
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

27 Wilton Crescent, S.W.1.

A PROTEST

Sir,—Weeks ago the accuracy of a report of mine was impugned in the New Statesman by the Countess of Listowel. My reply, maintaining the accuracy of my report, was neither acknowledged nor published!

Upon inquiry, without apology, I am told you will print "not more than 50 words." Well——?

W. Lloyd Davies
Chief Reporter, *Lincolnshire Standard*

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HERBERT JENKINS

BOOKS IN GENERAL

She looked unusually charming to-day from the very fact that she was not vividly conscious of anything but of having a mind near her that asked her to be something better than she actually was.

It is easy to guess which of the mid-Victorian novelists wrote these lines. The use of the word "mind" for young man, the yearning for self-improvement in the heroine, and, lastly, the painful, reiterating English, all betray George Eliot. This description of Esther Lyon in *Felix Holt* might have been chipped out in stone for George Eliot's epitaph and, as we take down a novel of hers from the shelf, we feel we are about to lever off the heavy lid of some solid family tomb. Yet the epitaph is not hers alone. The unremitting ethic of self-improvement has been the sepulchre of all mid-Victorian fiction except *Wuthering Heights*. To-day we should feel more interest in Esther Lyon if the mind of Felix Holt was asking her to be worse instead of better; the whole influence of psychology has turned our interest to what George Eliot would have called the downward path: to the failures of the will, the fuller dramas of consciousness and the record of sensibility. I do not say that Esther Lyon is falsely drawn. Not only English tradition from Fielding onward, but no less a person than the author of the *Liaisons Dangéreuses*, delights in the delectable evasions of the prig and the attraction of the prude. Something deeper than a fashion in love separates us from Esther Lyon and her creator—it is, we repeat, the competitive ethic of an expanding society. In all those novels of the mid-nineteenth century, the characters are either going up in the world, in which case they are good; or they are going down, in which case they are bad. Goldsmith and Fielding revelled in the misfortunes of the virtuous and the vagary of Fortune was one of the great eighteenth century themes. By the time of George Eliot, Fortune has become established and moral, and a character is tested, like the funds, by his tendency to rise or fall.

No novelist surpasses George Eliot in her sensitiveness to this active but delicate moral market. In other novelists, like Mrs. Gaskell or Dickens, the ethic is an incidental obstacle to our pleasure and we wish it away. If we wish it away in George Eliot, we abolish her altogether. She is, in a sense, all obstacle. And yet—can there be any question?—*Middlemarch* is one of the supreme English novels of the last 100 years. No novel approaches its width of reference, its intellectual power, or the unperturbed spaciousness of its narrative. Unlike her contemporaries, George Eliot persuades us to take her philosophy of life seriously as her successors like Hardy and Meredith did; and it is, I think, temporarily acceptable, because her concern with moral fate was strictly pruned of the fanciful and mazy buddings of Victorian Christianity. (It is a fact that Judaism attracted George Eliot far more than the Christian faith.) A forerunner of the modern psychologists, she promises no heaven and threatens no hell; the best and worst we shall get is Warwickshire. Her moral world is not the passive world of uplift and complacent aspiration; it is the dynamic world of the will, the smithy of character, a place of knowledge and judgments. So, in the sense of worldly wisdom, is Miss Austen's. But what a difference there is. To put it in our terms, if Miss Austen is the novelist of the ego and its platitudes, George Eliot is the novelist of the idolatries of the super-ego. We find in a book like *Middlemarch*, not character modified by circumstance only, but character first impelled and then modified by the beliefs, the ambitions, the spiritual objects which it assimilates. Lydgate's schemes for medical reform and his place in medical science, are as much part of his character as his way with the ladies. And George Eliot read up her medical history in order to get his position exactly right. Dorothea's yearning for a higher life of greater usefulness to mankind will stay with her all her days and will make her, from the average lazy man's point of view, an irritating woman; and from the average woman's point of view, a fool for all her cleverness. Many Victorian novelists have lectured us on the careers and aspirations of their people; none, before George Eliot, showed us the unity of intellect and nature in action. Her judgment on Lydgate as a doctor is a judgment on his fate as a man:

> He carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh and Paris the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. Lydgate's nature demanded this combination: he was an emotional creature, with a flesh and blood sense of fellowship, which withstood all the abstractions of special study. He cared not only for "cases," but for John and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth.

The Elizabeth who was, not indeed to wreck Lydgate's life, but (with far more probability) to corrupt his ideas and turn him into the smart practitioner, was Rosamund, his wife. Yet, in its own way, Rosamund's super-ego had the most distinguished ideals. A provincial tradesman's daughter, she too longed idealistically to rise; the desire was not vulgar until she supposed that freedom from crude middle-class notions of taste and bearing could only be obtained by marriage to the cousin of a baronet; and was not immoral until she made her husband's conscience pay for her ambitions. The fountain, George Eliot is always telling us, cannot rise higher than its source.

Such analyses of character have become commonplace to us. When one compares the respectable Rosamund Lydgate with, say, Becky Sharp, one sees that Rosamund is not unique. Where *Middlemarch* is unique in its time is in George Eliot's power of generalisation. The last thing one accuses her of is unthinking acceptance of convention. She seeks, in her morality, the positive foundation of natural law, a kind of Fate whose measures are as fundamental as the changes of the seasons in nature. Her intellect is sculptural. The clumsiness of style does not signify muddle, but an attempt to carve decisively. We feel, indeed, the clarifying force of a powerful mind. Perhaps it is not naturally powerful. The power may have been acquired. There are two George Eliots: the mature, experienced quiet-humoured Midlander who wrote the childhood pages of *The Mill on the Floss*; and the naïve, earnest and masterly intellectual with her half dozen languages and her scholarship. But unlike the irony of our time, hers is at the expense not of belief, but of people. Behind them, awful but inescapable in the conscience, looms the status of what they ought to have been. Hers is a mind that has grown by making judgments—as Mr. Gladstone's head was said to have grown by making speeches.

Middlemarch resumes the observation and experience of a lifetime. Until this book George Eliot often strains after things beyond her capacity, as Dorothea Casaubon strained after a spiritual power beyond her nature. But now in *Middlemarch* the novelist is reconciled to her experience. In Dr. Casaubon George Eliot sees that tragedy may paralyse the very intellect which was to be Dorothea's emancipation. Much of herself (George Eliot said, when she was accused of portraying Mark Pattison), went into Casaubon, and I can think of no other English novel before or since which has so truthfully, so sympathetically and so intimately described the befogged and grandiose humiliations of the scholar, as he turns at bay before the vengeance of life. Casaubon's jealousy is unforgettable, because, poisonous though it is, it is not the screech of an elderly cuckold, but the voice of strangled nature calling for justice. And notice, here, something very characteristic; George Eliot's pity flows from her moral sense, from the very seat of justice, and not from a sentimental heart. Her philosophy is valid because it enlarges and generalises the human issue. After George Eliot character in the novel became more than people.

Middlemarch is the first of many novels about groups of people in provincial towns. They are differentiated from each other not by class or fortune only, but by their moral history, and this moral differentiation is not casual, it is planned and has its own inner hierarchy. Look at the groups. Dorothea, Casaubon and Ladislaw seek to enter the highest spiritual fields—not perhaps the highest, for us, because the world of George Eliot's imagination was prosaic and not poetic—still, they desire, in their several ways, to influence the standards of mankind. Lydgate, as we have seen, is devoted to science and expects to be rewarded by a career. He and his wife are practical people, who seek power. The pharisaical Bulstrode, the banker, expects to rise both spiritually and financially at once until he sits on the right-hand of God, the Father; a business man with a bad conscience, he is the father of the Buchmanites and of all the success-religions. The Garths, being country people and outside all this urban development, believe simply in the virtue of work as a natural law and they are brought up against Fred Vincy, Rosamund's brother. He, as a horsey young man educated beyond his means, has a cheerful belief in irresponsible Style and in himself as a thing of pure male beauty with a riding crop. We may not accept George Eliot's standards, but we can see that they are not conventional, and that they do not make her one-sided. She is most intimately sympathetic to human beings and is never sloppy about them. When Vincy quarrels with Bulstrode about Fred's debts, when Casaubon's jealousy of Ladislaw secrets its first venom, when Lydgate tries vainly to talk about money to his wife or Fred goes to his mad old grandfather for a loan, vital human issues are raised. The great scenes of *Middlemarch* are exquisite, living transpositions of real moral dilemmas. Questions of principle are questions of battle; they point the weapons of the human comedy and battle is not dull. In consequence, George Eliot's beliefs are rarely boring, because they are a dynamism. They correspond to psychological and social realities, though more especially to the functions of the will; they are boring only when, in the Victorian habit, she harangues the reader and pads out the book with brainy essays.

I see I have been writing about *Middlemarch* as though it were a piece of engineering. What about the life, the humour, the pleasure? There are failures: Dorothea and Ladislaw do not escape the fate of so many Victorian heroes and heroines who are turned by their creator's affection into statues. Has George Eliot forgotten how much these two difficult, sensitive and proud people will annoy each other by the stupidity which so frequently afflicts the intellectual? Such scruples, such play-acting! But Lydgate and Rosamund quarrelling about money; Rosamund quietly thwarting her husband's decisions, passing without conscience to love affairs with his friends and ending as a case-hardened widow who efficiently finds a second father for her family—these things are perfect. Mary Garth defying the old miser is admirable. But the most moving thing in the book—and I always think this is the real test of a novelist—is given to the least likeable people. Bulstrode's moral ruin and his inability to confess to his dull wife, is portrayed in a picture of dumb human despondency which recalls a painting by Sickert. One hears the clock tick in the silence that attends the wearing down of two lives that can cling together but dare not speak.

The humour of George Eliot gains rather than loses by its mingling with her intellectual. Here we feel the sound influence of her girlish reading of the eighteenth-century novelists. This humour is seen at its best in scenes like the one where the relations of the miser come to his house, waiting to hear news of his will; and again in the sardonic description of the spreading of the scandal about Bulstrode and Lydgate. George Eliot followed causes down to their most scurrilous effects. She is superb in scandal and public rumour. Her slow tempo is an advantage, and it becomes exciting to know that she will make her point in the minor scenes as surely as she will make it in the great ones. Mrs. Dollop of The Tankard has her short paragraph of immortality:

> (She had) often to resist the shallow pragmatism of customers disposed to think their reports from the outer world were of equal force with what had "come up" in her mind.

Mr. Trumbull, the auctioneer, is another portrait, a longer one, smelling of the bar and the saleroom. Dickens would have caricatured this gift from heaven. George Eliot observes and savours. Characteristically she catches his intellectual pretensions and his offensive superiority. We see him scent the coming sale and walk over to Mary Garth's desk and read her copy of Scott's *Anne of Geierstein*, just to show that he knows a book when he sees one:

> "The course of four centuries," he reads out unexpectedly, "has well enough elapsed since the series of events which are related in the following chapters took place on the Continent."

That moment is one of the funniest in the English novel, one of those mad touches like the insertion of a dog stealing a bone, which Hogarth put into his pictures.

Of course, there is no real madness in George Eliot. Both heavy feet are on the ground. Outside of *Wuthering Heights* there is no madness in Victorian fiction. The Victorians were a histrionic people who often measured themselves by the Elizabethans; and George Eliot, like Browning and Tennyson, was compared to Shakespeare by her contemporaries. The comparison failed, if only because madness is lacking. Hysteria, the effect of the exorbitant straining of their wills, the Victorians did, alas, too often achieve. George Eliot somehow escapes it. She is too level-headed. One pictures her, in life, having a good grumble instead of making a scene. There is no hysteria in *Middlemarch;* perhaps there are no depths because there is so much determination. But there is a humane breadth and resolution in this novel which offer neither hope nor despair to mankind, but simply the necessity of mastering the moral life. George Eliot's last words on her deathbed might, one irreverently feels, be placed on the title page of her collected works; "Tell them," she is reported to have said, "the pain is on the left side." Informative to the last, and knowing better than the doctor, the self-made positivist dies.

V. S. PRITCHETT

RIMBAUD

Selected Verse Poems of Arthur Rimbaud. Translated by Norman Cameron. *Hogarth Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

The task of translating Rimbaud is formidable. He isn't a poet who carries naturally, on whatever level, into English; no, the simplicities goggle, the violence turns sour, all is strain and burr and gristle. To gauge the difficulty, imagine first the qualities of an English Rimbaud. Certain passages of Blake, Coleridge and Donne come to mind; but how remote from one another! A parallel for *Le Bateau Ivre* might be found in *The Ancient Mariner;* and if Donne (the Donne of the Elegies) had written of childhood . . . . Blake, however, as Mr. Cyril Connolly has pointed out, is the nearest equivalent. The likeness between particular poems is more than accidental—

How sweet I roam'd from field to field
And tasted all the summer's pride,

. . . .

Pars les soirs bleus d'été j'irai dans les sentiers,
Picoté par les blés, fouler l'herbe menue,

—an affinity exists touching at many points. *London* and *Paris se Repeuple. Infant Sorrow* and *Les Poètes de Sept Ans. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Saison en Enfer.* And it would be easy to extend the list. Differences, of course, obtrude. Blake wrote like an angel and Rimbaud like a devil; Rimbaud scoured the universe seeking an innocence that was Blake's by nature; but still childhood, nature, madness, defiance, and the compulsion of God form a bond that exists between Rimbaud and no other English poet. It is a point worth remembering for the translator who finds himself without supports.

If Mr. Cameron had taken into account this—what should one call it?—English ambience of Rimbaud, I believe he would have succeeded more with his translations. Even imitation Blake would be preferable to—

Seasons and palaces,
What soul's transgressionless?

Seasons and palaces,

Bliss has been my occult school;
Even zero owns its rule.

This version can hardly produce anything except stares from new readers and howls from those who are familiar with the original. (Even the sense of the last two lines has been missed; a literal rendering would be "I have made the magic study of Happiness which no man escapes.") Mr. Cameron has been least lucky with Rimbaud's simplicities. He has another capital fault: the insistence on a six-foot instead of the usual five-foot line to represent the French Alexandrine. This seems to me bad in principle, since it is better to pack your lines than pad.

"As I proceeded down along impassive rivers," the first line of *The Drunken Boat*, just isn't a line of poetry at all, but something flatter—dreadfully flatter—than prose. Hence the lack of tense phrasing, the rather wooden rhythms, the superfluous introductions, that mar Mr. Cameron's pages. Too many acquiescent words and stock adjectives—from Rimbaud's stock, it's true, but they take off from the beauty and violence of the original. *Paris se Repeuple* spits poison over the degraded inhabitants of a city:

Et quand vous serez bas, geignant sur vos entrailles,
Les flancs morts, réclamant votre argent, éperdus,
La rouge courtisane aux seins gros de batailles,
Loin de votre stupeur, tordra ses poings ardus!

Here is Mr. Cameron's version:

When you are lying low, your sorry entrails spilled,
And loins exhausted, whining for your money back,
Then the red courtesan, her breasts with battles filled,
Far from your squalid swoon, her toiler's fists shall
rack.

"*Sorry* entrails," "*squalid* swoon": in each case the adjective, necessary to provide an extra foot, weakens the verse. Eloquence is whittled away, an adjectival style tends to muffle Rimbaud's uncompromising energy, and the result is neither new poem nor plain crib, but a genre product of Rimbaud-in-English.

The favourite poem with English translators has always been *Les Chercheuses de Poux.* Compare the versions of Sturge Moore, Roy Campbell and Cameron. Here is the second verse in each: the tall sisters with prowling fingers have bent over the child lying in bed.

The child before a window open wide,
Where blue air bathes a maze of flowers, they sit;
And in his heavy hair dew falls, while glide
Their fingers terrible with charm through it.

Fresh as from roses swung amid wet leaves
Their furtive breathing chants. . . .
(Sturge Moore, *Adaptations and Variations.*)

They seat him by a window, where the blue
Air bathes a sheaf of flowers: with rhythms calm,
Into his heavy hair where falls the dew,
Prowl their long fingers terrible in charm.

He hears their breathing whistle in long sighs
Flowering with ghostly pollen. . . .
(Roy Campbell, *Flowering Reeds.*)

Beside a widely open window, where the blue
Air bathes a tangled bunch of flowers, they set the
child,
And in his heavy hair besprinkled with the dew
Their delicate fingers travel, terrible and mild.

He hears the singing of their breaths sharp with
suspense,
Flower-sweet with herbal, rosy honeys. . . .
(Norman Cameron.)

The freest and easily the best is Roy Campbell's. I had forgotten him, in speaking of English equivalents; "after Rimbaud" could be attached, without shame, to much of the best poetry in *Flowering Reeds* and *Adamastor.* There is not much to choose between Mr. Sturge Moore and Mr. Cameron; though the former, I think, manag his shorter line more capably.

And yet, and yet . . . Mr. Cameron's trans tion and selection of thirty-two poems has gi me a great deal of pleasure. First, the bulk valuable. Whatever one may say about wood rhythms, ungainly phrases and an occasio mistranslation, the impression of Rimba remains. His content, his shock, his infer pictures of childhood survive—more than surviv they din, agreeably or not, on ear and eye. much essential Rimbaud has never before, as f as my knowledge goes, battered its way i English; and that is an achievement for whi we must be grateful to Mr. Cameron. Mo of the famous poems from *Premiers V* and *Les Illuminations* have been included; a against the total failure with *O saisons, ô châtea* there must be set successes. *Les Corbeaux,* Mr. Cameron's English, will win new readers f Rimbaud.

Lord, when the meadow has grown cold
  And in the shell-torn villages
The angelus is no more tolled
  And Nature shows her ravages,
Make them descend from the great heights,
The rooks, my darlings and delights! . . .

More difficult to achieve—because Rimbaud music can't be transferred literally like h painting—is the sonnet of the vowels. There i something of the original spell-binding in

. . . E, the glacier's insolence,
Steams, tents, white kings, the quiver of a flowe
bell. . . .

and in the closing tercet:

O, the last trumpet, loud with strangely strident bra
The silences through which the Worlds and Ang
pass:
—O stands for Omega, His Eyes' deep violet glow!

Audacity and immense patience are necessary translate Rimbaud at all effectively. I hope th Mr. Cameron's labours won't end with th publication of this volume; a great deal mo should be done in the way of improvement an cutting out failures; and some of the difficulti could be overcome if Mr. Cameron would dro his devotion to the six-foot line, and adapt eac poem to the length that causes least ungainlines Better even to sacrifice an occasional word Rimbaud than have to enlist mercenaries one's own. I look forward to a second an improved edition in, say, 1944. Meanwhil though with more blemishes and less fluenc Mr. Cameron has done for Rimbaud what Mr J. B. Leishman did a few years back for Rilke opened the way to a spring of modern Europea poetry.

G. W. STONIER

NEW NOVELS

Signed With Their Honour. By JAMES A DRIDGE. *Michael Joseph.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Go Down, Moses. By WILLIAM FAULKNE *Chatto and Windus.* 9*s.*

The Day Will Come. By LION FEUCHTWANGE *Hutchinson.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Marling Hall. By ANGELA THIRKELL. *Hami Hamilton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Dullness is perhaps the easiest initial criteri of literary criticism; initial because at best it c only be negative. Dull books are easy to condem but no one would claim that every book whi escapes the charge of dullness necessarily deserv any further praise. In fact there are many reaso for treating the whole concept of dullness wi extreme suspicion. For one thing, it is the mo subjective of all criteria. I have twice stuck the first hundred pages of *Clarissa*, and I kno three intelligent people who admit their inabili to read Tolstoy, Flaubert and Jane Aust respectively. Another weakness of this criteri is that some varieties of dullness are agreeab and even necessary. George Eliot is the mast of agreeable dullness, and half the charm *Middemarch* is that one can read it for five minut in bed every night, and spend a year over without impatience. And even the most startli novel must have its moments of dullness, if on because a succession of startling statements defe their own purpose.

The only safe conclusion is that time is the nal arbiter. After many years some books possess o long a record of neglect that they acquire a ullness which time has assured, almost sanctified. Some sort of objective condemnation has been eached.

Yet for all these reservations dullness remains he chief pre-occupation of the critic, and this is nevitable. A book which has interested him deserves his gratitude at least for that. A book which has bored him requires an exhausting truggle for objectivity: the strong impulse is o be spiteful. The best a critic can do is to xplain his interest and his boredom, and rashly, f he chooses, prophesy survival or oblivion.

Of the four novels under review I found Mrs. Thirkell's unreadable. Mr. Faulkner's profoundly difficult and heavy, Herr Feuchtwanger's as easy s pie and Mr. Aldridge's engrossing. Yet I doubt whether the merits of these books correspond to my own interest. Only on Mrs. Thirkell's place in the list would I stake my butter ation.

Signed with their Honour—a clumsy title, only partially justified by the apt quotation from Spender—is a novel about British fighter pilots n the battle of Greece. Into adventure and death s woven the love story of Flight Lieutenant Quayle for a Greek girl from Athens. The pattern of the book closely follows *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—Quayle is Robert Jordan with wings nd a London University background.

But Mr. Aldridge has avoided the pretentiousness of this later Hemingway, and the embarrassng nonsense of his love interest. Helen Stangou, ike most of the other characters, is only half alive, but she is a thousand times preferable to the preposterous "Rabbit." What is truly interesting s that so ardent a disciple should have written so good a book. By rejecting the worst in Hemingway, Mr. Aldridge has made it possible to form fairer judgment of that abused and dubious method. The good qualities are easy to assess: fluent narrative style, an alert eye and a certain deft mobility. These are precisely the best antidotes to dullness, and the only dullness in this book comes from repetition. Again, closely associated with this method of writing is the skilful use of technical knowledge.

"Dog-fights" disappeared for ever with the manœuvrable Gladiator fighters, and when Quayle s transferred to Hurricanes he is depressed by the relative unsubtlety of the new technique. All this is fully explained, and to at least one gnorant reader it was of absorbing interest.

The weakness of the Hemingway method is, in the fullest sense of the word, its superficiality. Events are vividly seen and described, but little is seen behind the events. Nor are the characters much more than actors in a silent film. They are seen clearly—the gesture of a pilot as he climbs into the cockpit, untidy Greek soldiers retreating from Tepeleni—but they are seen in only two dimensions. The effort to probe into Quayle's mind is usually a failure, for Quayle-Jordan has no mind. He is simply the ideal Anglo-Saxon man—modest, humourless, efficient and decent-minded.

There is not one twist or oddity in his character. Fighter pilots and American engineers may each have a norm round which they circulate, but there isn't one who *is* the norm. As a character Quayle is both too good to be true, and too flat to be true. Again, the restraint which is one of the merits of the style can easily topple into affectation. This happens less in Aldridge than in Hemingway, but it happens. The dry comments on death suggest at first a profundity of feeling beyond expression, but later only a failure of expression. Perhaps there is nothing harder in the world than to describe bereavement. But "Poor Old Hickey!" is an inadequate comment on the death of a beloved Squadron Leader. It is a *probable* comment, but the novelist's claim is to explore the feeling underneath the probable; and here both Aldridge and Hemingway usually fail.

What is admirable is that Mr. Aldridge should have deliberately chosen to use an available style which suited his purpose. Plagiarism would be a foolish charge, for the style is exactly suited to the exciting, topical novel which he has wished to write: it is doubtful whether he could have invented a better one. This book tells us nothing new about the nature of human beings, but it tells us a great deal about Gladiators, Savoias and Messerschmitts; about Greek soldiers fighting and Greek fifth columnists intriguing; about the sounds of a mountain battle and the appearance of parachutes over Crete. This is far from implying that *Signed with their Honour* can be dismissed as journalism. To give so true and lucid a description of war, perception needs to be deeper than in even the slickest last-minute despatch.

There is nothing lucid about Faulkner, and his lack of lucidity is evidently deliberate. His earlier novels were certainly no models of clarity, but their sleepy strength was compelling and their horrors were very horrifying indeed. In *Go Down, Moses*, seven stories of the modern South, there are many echoes of the robust author of *Sanctuary*, but the echoes are depressing. They are a sad contrast to the general mud. The mud always threatened, but now it has risen like a tide and covered all but a few small islands. It is doubtful whether even Faulkner's most devoted admirer will follow him here with much more than a sense of duty. The sentences roll on, inversions after qualification often a full paragraph in length. To understand one must re-read, and understanding brings nothing but irritation that so simple a statement shouldn't have been simply stated. With all the qualifications of subjectivity, this is a wonderfully dull book. It is dull because the reward nowhere near justifies the intellectual effort. And yet the best in Faulkner's book is better than anything in Mr. Aldridge. The difference between the two is largely a difference of beginning and ending. *Signed with their Honour*, a sad enough book in many ways, leaves a far less gloomy impression. It is the tour-de-force of a gifted young man, and the faults are faults of judgment. Faulkner's book has the faults of exhaustion.

My interest in Herr Feuchtwanger's book was probably eccentric. On the whole historical novels are uncongenial to contemporary taste, and on the whole contemporary taste has good cause for rejecting them. Either history is absurdly distorted, or historical research dominates the novel and leaves nothing that couldn't have been better said by a historian. Had I read Gibbon I should no doubt have been offended by the inaccuracies of *The Day will Come*. At the same time I should have been able to indulge in the pleasantest pastime of a reviewer. ". . . the childish error of imagining that the Julia of Domitian's reign was connected in any way with the Flavian family." But ignorance allowed me to assume Feuchtwanger's erudition, and I found absorbing the intricacies of Jewish policy and senatorial intrigue. Yet the book gains nothing by being a novel, and the pleasure of the ignorant is open to the suspicion of the better-informed.

Mrs. Thirkell is easily the safest bet for oblivion. She writes untruthfully about unreal and uninteresting people. The book is a facetious Debrett in which the only passion which appears to spring, to gush from the heart, is contempt for novelists whose sales are under two thousand. I found this book so oppressive that a hundred pages left me dizzy. And yet dullness? Several thousand readers will know the reason why. The answer is to be seen in the corpses of Corelli, Ouida, Hall Caine . . . in the moribund body of

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Dell. Popularity is no disproof of dullness, for what reader of Thirkell could stomach a Corelli! Vulgar taste is fortunately fickle; there are no great classics of vulgar popularity. Mrs. Thirkell's dullness is the drabbest of all, the unscrupulous exploitation of contemporary weakness. Perhaps the next epoch will call for factory epics and Stakhanovite heroines. Then we shall witness an auto-da-fé in the Park of Rest and Culture, and the tweeded dummies of this pygmy Barsetshire will be the first to burn. PHILIP TOYNBEE

CIVILISATION AND WAR

Conscience and Society. By DR. RANYARD WEST. *Methuen.* 15s.

"Mr. Hobbes, the Atheist," the perpetrator of *The Leviathan*, like most people who insist on thinking straight, is usually classed as saying the opposite of what he meant. He wanted peace. He wanted to call his soul his own, and to leave other men to do the same. He understood the conditions which, in this imperfect world, alone make liberty possible. He worked out the technique of defending it against three of its chief enemies, the champions of divine right, the champions of social and political privilege, and the fanatics of conscience. He had no use for mass-murder or for suicide or for the doctrines which hallow them. He shared with St. Augustine, with Shakespeare (when he was being serious) and with Confucius the notion that there are no good and no bad men, but only men who often want, and sometimes manage, to behave better than they might. He knew that one child with a stomach-ache in a nursery, one man in a bar with a grievance, one prig in an argument with a scruple, one girl at a picnic without one, can turn a game or a talk into a free fight, a social group into an inferno of suspicion, jealousy and hate. That was why he believed in having someone in the Chair at every social unit's meeting who could be relied on to nip infernos in the bud.

Dr. West is a Hobbist who wants to deal with total war as Hobbes wanted to deal with civil war. Like Hobbes he is a student of human nature; like Hobbes' his average man is neither Rousseau's noble savage nor Freud's sex-ridden neurotic. He has studied mankind as a physician and as a psychologist, in nursery-schools, in clinics and as a practitioner of psycho-analysis. Equipped with his own notes of cases from the Tavistock Square clinic, he turned to the study of the classics of political theory, and to treatises on international law In this book he gives his own answer to Hobbes' question, how to make effective the "passions enclining to peace," how to make the like of man less "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

There are at least three possible answers: war is caused by bad men; get rid of them and peace will come; everyone is good at heart; arrange men in the right pattern, set them in the appropriate atmosphere, and they will behave like gentlemen. Neither answer satisfied Hobbes; neither satisfies Dr. West. Each has come by a route of his own back to the idea of man's nature on which European civilisation has been built. In the Middle Ages this idea was expressed in theological terms; the soul of man was a battleground between grace and temptation, between God and the devil. Man's one hope of salvation, of victory over the wiles of the Evil One, was in obedience to the Church, the channel of grace, the embodiment of the Holy Spirit. Everyone was a sinner, everyone could be saved, but only by being rescued from himself, his weak, unstable, plastic self. Nowadays, following Samuel Butler at long last, we are coming to see disease as a crime and crime as a disease. Suicide and mass-murder call for diagnosis and treatment. It is the delusion that justifies them from which men must somehow be deterred, if need be by the fear of punishment. The way to stop war is to make loyalty to the sovereign state a punishable offence. The shop-girl of Dumfries, whom Dr. West quotes as saying: "I'm glad I'm British; the French and Germans seem to be terrible," might be excused part of her term of imprisonment for having forgotten Bannockburn, but should serve one long enough to teach her (and others) to be glad to be human. Just as long as the sovereign state is allowed to claim men's final loyalty, war will go on. Only when murder and attempted suicide for patriotic, as for private, motives, become indictable offences before a competent court will force and fraud cease to be cardinal virtues beyond the frontier, as they have long ceased to be within it.

State worship then is a fixation, the cure of which can only come through the transference of the herd instinct to another object. Man is a worshipping animal. He has outgrown the worship of his lord, his city, his canton, his province; at the moment he worships his nation. Give him the necessary stimulus and he will retain the intensity of his loyalty while he shifts it to humanity as a whole and remain just as ready to die for that object, even though there will be no-one anxious to kill him.

But man, if he is prone to worship, is ev more prone to backslide. Only if the World St is armed at all points to save him from hims will he resist the temptation to relapse in suicidal loyalty to some other unit. Bfing in valid, legal sanction and you can deal wi recalcitrance. Rely on good feeling, promi and ideals and you will surely be let dow International law must become real, and ce to be sham, law; loyalty must be taught limitations; Leviathan must grow to his full si When all this has happened humanity will ha found its way through one Slough of Despo and be ready to tackle the next one. "Th conscience of the world"—it is Dr. West's fi word—"must be placed behind its 'To Society.'" KENNETH BELL

STIRLING STATION

The Greatest People in the World. B FLYING OFFICER X. *Cape.* 2s.

It is an open secret that this little book stories about Bomber Command is the work Mr. H. E. Bates, and it shows great intelligen and imagination on the part of someone authority that he should have been given th opportunity of writing them. For he is not obvious choice, nor would one, I think, ha supposed from reading his other stories that h would produce these moving, slangy, hum portraits which give a picture of the bomb pilot as near to the truth as we from the outsid are likely to get. Mr. Bates was popularly know as a "country" writer, but his country w always on the fringes of suburban poverty; country infected with corrugated iron and rottin fences and seedy acres of barren soil: a countr where people lurked somewhere just above th moron level, overblown, cringing, brutal scared: where the climate was heavy with se temper and thunderstorms.

Nerves and the inarticulate, these might b taken as a link with the aerodrome, and certain Mr. Bates brings to his new territory a develope skill at what might be called dumb dialogue the art of the monosyllabic. He brings, of cours too, his sharp observation, his power of fixing th atmosphere with a few exactly placed words, an paramountly, his sense of design. In short wh a pleasure after the spate of amateurs—goo though in their way one or two of them hav been—what a pleasure to watch the professio using his instruments precisely and exactl knowing to a thousandth part of an inch wh

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an and what cannot be done, when to go on and hen, above all, to stop, what the medium can erfectly do and what lies outside its scope.

The Greatest People in the World contains nine hort stories about life on a Stirling station, each f them centred round one pilot. In the smallest ompass Mr. Bates succeeds in creating the tmosphere of the place and the occasion, the ndividual character and the variety of backrounds from which the pilots derive. Each is a harp limited impression, and yet between them hey imply the whole of the widely scattered levels nd points from which these young men have ome together. For his title does not refer to he pilots themselves, but to the people who red them, in labourers' cottages, in Australian arms, in Texas, in suburban houses, "the same imple people, the same humble faithful eternal eople, giving always and giving everything: the reatest people in the world," as one of them says f his own mother and father.

If it is his art to make this wider implication, is immense skill is best shown in the vivid vocation of atmosphere, steady and steeled in he long enduring hours of driving towards the lak and the lights, or in bringing back a machine o crippled that it dissolves in pieces as it touches own on the runway, tense, nervous, windy in he Mess before or after a raid, expressive with he brittle slang:

> I went back into the ante-room at last and, for a moment, in the bright and now crowded room, I could not believe my eyes. Rubbing his cold hands together, his eyes remote and chilled, his sweater hanging loose below his battle dress, the pilot of K for Kitty was standing by the fireplace. There was a cross of flesh-pink plastic bandage on his forehead, and I knew that something had happened.
>
> "Hallo," I said.
>
> "Hallo," he said. "You're back."
>
> For a minute I didn't say anything else. I wanted to shake his hand and tell him I was glad he was back. I knew that if he had been in a train wreck or a car crash I should have shaken his hand and told him that I was glad. Now somebody had shot him up, and all I said was:
>
> "When did you get in?"
>
> "About an hour ago."
>
> "Everything O.K.?"
>
> "Wrapped her up."
>
> "Well," I said. "Just like that?"
>
> "Just like that," he said.
>
> I looked at his eyes. They were bleared and wet and excited. He had made a crash landing; he was safe; he was almost the best pilot in the outfit.
>
> "Anyone see me come in?" he said.
>
> "Saw you from control," someone said.
>
> "How did it look?"
>
> "Perfect until the bloody airscrew fell off."
>
> Everyone laughed; as if airscrews falling off were a great joke.
>
> Nobody said anything about anybody being lucky to be back, but only:
>
> "Have an argument?"
>
> "Flak blew bloody great bit out of the wing. The inter-comm. went and then both turrets."
>
> "Many fighters?"
>
> "Ten at a time."
>
> "Get one?"
>
> "One certain. Just dissolved. One probable."
>
> "Good show. What about the ships?"
>
> "I think we pranged them."
>
> "Good show," we said, "Good show."

One would say, so exactly has Mr. Bates caught the authentic accent, so pervaded is the whole little book with the sharp odour and flavour of the real thing, that he had made this, as much as his other neurotic country, his own world. But that he is not so perfectly at home in it is betrayed by his too easily at times slipping into the professional tricks. It may be the result of popularising, of course, but the ending of at least two of the stories is much too slick. Then again understatement is certainly the genuine air of the R.A.F., but understatement is also the sentimental trap set for all post-Hemingway story writing, and Mr. Bates sometimes falls into it. Perhaps these stories will not add much to Mr. Bates's reputation in later years, but may in the end count for him as the start of a wider range and a warmer humanity. In any case they give the outsider the most genuine, because the most intuitively perceived, of all the pictures of a pilot's life. If you want to know what it feels like to be on one of the operational stations from which the Stirlings start out to bomb the Continent, you will get the exact feel of it from these nine short tales.

T. C. WORSLEY

Coucou. Written and illustrated by HÉLÈNE TERRÉ. *Chatto and Windus.* 3s. 6d.

The commandant of the Fighting French A.T.S. has made a delightful little book for children in which the French and English texts are printed one under the other. It is the story of a little blackamoor girl who enlists as an ambulance-driver in the French Red Cross, comes to England to continue the struggle, is imprisoned as a suspect, and, on her release, joins the Free French. Later, she descends from a parachute in Africa, and rides a camel through the Arc de Triomphe in a liberated Paris. The illustrations, mostly in colour, are as enchanting as the text, and the book will make a Christmas present useful as well as ornamental for any child who has begun to learn French.

Week-end Competitions

No. 665

Set by G. W. Stonier

The usual prizes are offered for the best poem, of not more than 16 lines, on a favourite piece of music.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, November 9th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 662

Set by Roderick Random

Popular psychologists sometimes prepare lists of questions for self-analysis so that readers can test whether they are extraverts or introverts. Competitors are asked to compile a set of seven such questions specially suitable to test any one of the following: A.T.S. Commandants, Black Marketeers, Senior Treasury Officials, Independent M.P.'s, Writers of Strategy, Competition Setters, Popular Psychologists.

Report by Roderick Random

Regrettably I have been true to my surname, and the entries to this competition—how, when, where I can't imagine—have simply been lost. To all those whose labours have been thus thrown away, I apologise abjectly; but competitors with good memories or carbons will have the chance to recoup, while others will have the pleasure of being able to go in for two competitions in one week. The Editor has suggested that the best way out for everyone is to set the competition again, entries to be submitted by Monday, November 9th.

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